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The limits of liberal plurality: From political identity to strong recognition

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Abstract

Through the analysis of liberal theories of plurality and diversity –multiculturalism, interculturalism, nationalisms, cosmopolitanism, communitarianism-, I make a series of arguments regarding the positive recognition of difference. I acknowledge the merits and benefits of these theories in providing political recognition to minority groups. However, I introduce the notions of strong identity and recognition that could open the door for solutions to some puzzles left unsolved by the theories that promote political recognition, including claims of essentialism, issues on the categorisation of minorities and majorities, problems related to social cohesion, integration and liberalisation of minorities, and of course issues on recognition of cultural value and identity.

Constant with the analysis. I portray the concept of identity from an ontological perspective. I argue that identity mainly refers to what we are. In the strict sense, it is not a property or something we can *instrumentally* use to deal with the issues of everyday life. Identity also can be understood as membership, belonging, something socially constructed, and the social glue in modern societies while nevertheless being more than that. We do not have multiple identities, but a complex unified identity that includes everything that we are. To develop this part of the argument, I draw on Charles Taylor's theory of the modern self. Finally, I suggest that strong recognition is pre-dialogical, and does not lead to the direct integration of minorities into the main culture. Further, it fosters internal social change, supports a stronger idea of collective autonomy, and is not mediated by institutions.

These notions of strong identity and recognition allow us to move beyond some limitations of the liberal theories, while at the same time valuing the benefits of political recognition. I argue that strong recognition does not contravene political recognition but, in fact, enables it.

Keywords: identity; recognition; political plurality; liberalism; social cohesion

Lay Summary

This thesis explores the notions of human diversity and plurality. The aim of the text is to shed light on debates about cultural diversity and plurality in the context of liberal democracies. For this reason, it makes sense to develop a careful analysis of liberal theories of diversity and plurality that unveils the way we generally recognise difference in western societies. I centre the assessment of the theories, and later my alternative to them, on two concepts: *identity and recognition*. These two terms are in the middle of important struggles in the context of western democracies, particularly in the case of minority groups.

What I claim is that liberal perspectives provide an important but incomplete picture of our current diversity issues. I also claim that an overemphasis on the political might prevent valuable forms of deeper recognition from developing. In other words, I try to transcend the constraints of a dominant liberal narrative and its tendency to place important issues in the realm of the political.

In consequence, I do not argue that political recognition is irrelevant to constructing our identity; it does provide strong structures shaping the understanding of ourselves and feelings of belonging. However, other existential aspects are beyond its reach. It is in this context that I develop an idea of strong identity and strong recognition.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Uno, nessuno e centomila -One, No One and One Hundred Thousand (1990)- is a novel written by the Italian Nobel laureate Luigi Pirandello. It tells the story of Vitangelo Moscarda, who one fine day while looking himself at the mirror, gets caught in an identity crisis after his wife points out his nose tilts to the right. This fact, evident for the people around him but unknown to him, triggers growing anxiety in Moscarda, who does not know who he is anymore. He realises that the understanding of himself does not coincide with the image that others have of him. The novel tells the story of a relentless struggle for reducing the disparity between how Moscarda perceives himself and the ways others perceive him. Moscarda is *one* because his individuality is still there, he has self-perception and self-understanding; he is *no one* because he cannot recognise himself in any of the images that others impose on him; he is *one hundred thousand* because all the different understandings that others have of him seem more real than the one he cannot enforce on others.

> I didn't know myself at all, for myself I had no personal reality, I underwent a kind of constant melting, fluid, malleable; the others knew me, each in his way, according to the reality they had given me; that is to say, each saw in me a Moscarda that wasn't I, since I was actually no one for myself. All those Moscardas, and all of them more real than I who had for myself, as I said, no reality. (Pirandello, 1990:43)

Pirandello's masterpiece shows the difficulties of constructing a coherent and unitary identity. It denotes that our identity goes beyond the limits of ourselves and reaches others. Despite its being the closest, most intimate, most secure thing that we have our identity is importantly shaped by the recognition of the others. In more technical terms, *the construction of our selves, the construction of our identity, who we are, does not depend entirely on us, but it is tightly intertwined with the*

recognition provided by others. This is the transversal idea that goes through the entire text as a *leitmotif*. However, the 'dependency' on something external is not a notion that could find support without substantial resistance and controversy. The concepts we use to refer to ourselves seem to contradict such dependency on something external: individuality, subjectivity, personality, ego, self. I cannot address the problem if something individual is independent and its implications[1]. Nonetheless, we are inclined to accept that we are individuals, subjects, etc. because we are capable of existing independently from other objects and entities. Otherwise, we would be parts of something bigger but not self-sufficient unities.

In the case of human identity, there is a dominant narrative shaping the current idea of the auto-sufficiency of ourselves: modern identity. In consequence, despite my efforts to smoothly introduce different interpretations of concepts and notions that are widely accepted, sometimes the text might feel antagonising to the reader. This is not the intent, but is caused by poor style and lack of clarity.

In the modern world, we are all Moscarda, we all construct our own identity, we all have privileged and immediate access to ourselves. What others expect or understand us to be does not always coincide to what we think we are or want to be. And one more thing, the understanding of who we are is shaped by what others think of us. Our identity, as Taylor correctly affirms (1994), is tightly connected to its recognition. Therefore, the claims for recognition, particularly those of minorities and oppressed groups that shape an important part of the political and social landscape of our time, cannot be rightly addressed without considering the construction of identity and vice-versa.

Pirandello's novel helps illustrate that the construction of our identity is not enclosed in ourselves. However, we have to make the next step, which is what I try to do in this thesis. The argument moves further and describes how identity and recognition work in the ontological sense; it moves from problems on how others recognise me as an individual and/or group member, to know how we are able to recognise difference, particularly cultural difference. For this reason, it makes sense to develop a careful analysis of liberal theories of diversity and plurality that unveils the way we generally understand difference, recognition and identity in western societies.

[1] The problem of individuation can be traced to Aristotle's principle of individuation (1989), Leibniz' Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles (1991) and more recently to Jung's individuation process (Jung, 1976). However, it is a constant in philosophical debates and traditions.

1.1 Outlining purposes and announcing present research

This thesis explores the notions of human diversity and plurality. The aim of the text is to shed light on debates about cultural diversity and plurality in the context of liberal democracies. Through the analysis of liberal theories of plurality and diversity, particularly civic nationalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism, but also cosmopolitanism and communitarianism,[2] I make a series of arguments regarding the positive recognition of cultural difference. I centre the assessment of the theories, and later my alternative to them, on two concepts: *identity and recognition*. These two terms are in the middle of important struggles in the context of western democracies, particularly in the case of minority groups. As Charles Taylor's work shows, modern identity is at the core of important cultural and social conflicts; he also emphasises the importance of providing recognition to individuals and communities in order to avoid harm, oppression or a reduced mode of being (1989:25). Additionally, claims of identity recognition became paradigmatic demands for social and political justice in the twentieth century, taking that prominent place from the traditional struggles for redistribution (Fraser, 1997).

What I investigate is whether the particular form of recognition offered by liberal theories, in the form of political recognition, is still our '…most promising route to justice in a world of deep diversity.' (Kymlicka, 2016:76) It seems that despite the substantial efforts at providing recognition to individuals and groups in western democracies, there are puzzles left unsolved by our liberal theories. Moreover, it seems that some puzzles cannot be addressed from the liberal perspective. Consequentially, I introduce the notions of strong identity and strong recognition that could indicate a way forward beyond the limitations of liberal theories of diversity and plurality.

In the past, much research has focused on identity and recognition *in the political realm*. The contributions of these efforts are of great importance. Despite dubious narratives like the multiculturalism backlash (Vertovec & Wessendorf,

[2] Through the text I argue that all these theories are liberal, thought in difference ways. The relation between them is complex. Civic nationalism and cosmopolitanism are usually considered contrary stands. However, both claim to be liberal. Some forms of multiculturalism are openly liberal and others try to move away from some liberal principles. Interculturalism claims to be liberal and blames multiculturalism for being illiberal and relativistic. Additionally, communitarianism is not usually associated with liberalism. Despite communitarianism argues there are cultural determinations, it can embrace the principle of individual freedom. I ask the reader to accept, until I discuss each case, that these theories share liberal notions.

2010), ineffectiveness of affirmative action (Murrell & Jones, 1996) or the anti-democratic nature of gender quotas (Murray, 2014), it is evident that, in general terms, the conditions of individuals and groups claiming recognition improve when the state and its institutions provide political recognition -citizenship and rights- (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Johnston, Banting, Kymlicka, & Soroka, 2010). In consequence, I do not argue that liberal projects accommodating diversity and providing political recognition are wrong or should be abandoned. What I claim is that liberal perspectives provide an important but incomplete picture of our current diversity issues. To be fair, it is not only the liberal perspective but also any approach that focuses on political recognition that is incomplete. Although, as I will demonstrate, the liberal approach tends to deal with diversity issues by dragging them into the political arena.

I also claim that an overemphasis on the political might prevent valuable forms of deeper recognition from developing. The whole aim of the text is to transcend the constraints of a dominant liberal narrative and its tendency to place important issues in the realm of the political. In other words, there is room for diversity outside the walls of liberalism and its politics.

It might be thought that liberalism and approaches that focus on political recognition have already been successfully challenged. Indeed, two of the approaches considered in the thesis, multiculturalism and interculturalism, try to expand the limits of liberalism and of political solutions in relation to cultural diversity and pluralism. As a modern socio-political project, multiculturalism tries to expand the liberal framework without breaking it. The way I present multiculturalism in the text reflects the incremental efforts in challenging liberal assumptions: it starts with the notion of group-differentiated rights, which questions the uniform enforcement of laws; continues with Taylor's criticism of social neutrality, and it finishes with the second wind of multiculturalism that openly denies the liberal framework as the only possible approach to diversity and plurality. This incremental perspective leads us to acknowledge that liberalism is more diverse than we might think and that different multicultural approaches are liberal in distinctive ways. Taking as a reference an orthodox form of liberalism heavily lead by procedural constrains and mechanisms, I will show how each multicultural theory incrementally criticises and debunks some liberal assumptions and principles. However, I will also show how they also keep others. If it is fair to say so, the three multicultural theories that I present in the text are part of a new liberalism that criticises and pushes the boundaries of the old one

further. It is possible to criticise liberalism and remain liberal.

On another front, interculturalism, in its own way, also tries to deal with diversity and plurality outside some confines of the political realm. It proposes intercultural dialogue as a way to develop positive interactions between individuals and to reduce prejudices between members of different groups - although, it also claims that the principles of liberalism should regulate these interactions. However, neither of these approaches can consistently move outside the reduced sphere of politics nor break completely with the liberal framework. In consequence, I push these two efforts further and place problems of recognition and identity in the ontological dimension.

A contribution of this research is to place problems of recognition and identity within the scope of an ontological analysis and beyond confined political debates. Therefore, it is important to clarify what I exactly refer to when I use these terms. I start with the political and in the next section I clarify the ontological. For my purposes, the political denotes that dimension of human life where individual and collective actions, values, behaviours, processes and conflicts are mediated and/or led by the means of state institutions. When I refer particularly to political identity and political recognition, I underline their institutionally mediated character. Consequently, these notions are debated in connection with rights, policies and membership to a democratic polity. Clearly, there are richer ways to understand the political; saying otherwise implies a very narrow and restrictive idea of politics. By defining the political in this sense, I do not claim that other realms of human life overlapping social, cultural and individual affairs are automatically apolitical. There are many ways in which we can claim that most of our actions, behaviours, values and aims are unavoidably political. Sharp distinctions such as public vs private, individual vs collective or the political vs -in this case- the ontological are more analytical tools than phenomenological descriptions. However, this idea of the political as an institutional perspective is not arbitrary. Such a definition aligns with my argument that in modern societies, the institutionalisation of conflict is the source of plurality. Furthermore, it reflects the dominant understanding of recognition and identity, the subjects of this text.

> In general, we take “recognition” in evaluative contexts to denote acknowledging an object of value in a way that is appropriately responsive to its value and, (…) we will take political recognition to mean acknowledging citizens in ways that are appropriately responsive to their status as free and equal persons or members of the polity. (Owen & Tully, 2007:266)

This clarification is not to deny earlier discussions of the limitations of liberal political recognition, for instance by scholars of identity politics (Neofotistos, 2013). Nevertheless, it is more an umbrella term than a systematic movement and it does not always go beyond the political dimension. I suggest their valuable critique is more accurately directed at liberal approaches rather than at the limits of political recognition.

> What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier, pre-identarian forms of the politics of recognition is its demand for recognition on the basis of the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied: it is *qua* women, *qua* blacks, *qua* lesbians that groups demand recognition. The demand is not for inclusion within the fold of "universal humankind" on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect "in spite of" one's differences. Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself as different (Kruks, 2001:85).[3]

Identity politics voices the need to recognise difference, which in a way denotes the existential limitation of political recognition. When some individuals and groups ask for recognition, they do so with a deeper understanding of identity, which implies the need for something stronger than political recognition. As Sonia Kruks points out in the quotation, they demand more than *inclusion* within the fold of universal humankind, or in a less rhetorical expression, they demand more than inclusion in the mainstream society. When they ask for recognition, in other words, they ask for recognition from the other and not only from an abstract set of institutions. It is a more radical instance of Pirandello's metaphor, it is 'the other' that provides a fundamental form of recognition that goes beyond the reach of political institutions because it is 'the other' who can recognise the particular value of our difference and help us to construct our identity *as different*. In consequence, I do not argue that political recognition is irrelevant to constructing our identity; it does provide meaningful structures shaping the understanding of ourselves and feelings of belonging. However, certain existential aspects are beyond its reach. It is in this context that I develop an idea of strong identity and strong recognition. In this case the adjective strong denotes that both, identity and recognition, go beyond the political sphere; in this case the adjective does not describe as much as differentiate. Other forms of identity and recognition are not weak *per se*, I talk about strong identity and recognition to denote that ontological, existential and historical features should be considered in relation to those terms. I chose the word strong, as it will be clearer in Chapter 8, to mirror Charles Taylor's distinction between strong and weak evaluations.

The challenges of trying to define and secure the conditions for a strong form of recognition are numerous and not easy to address. It is because of these difficulties that political identity and recognition tend to be emphasised in the first place. Modern civic societies found that dealing with problems in the political realm is 'easier' than in other contexts. I will argue that this political fix is the main idea behind political plurality as the basis of civic nationalism, an idea that extends to other liberal theories. These theories share the view that diversity, inclusion and belonging are issues that can be 'better' managed through political mediation than direct ethnic, religious or racial confrontation. The idea of the state and its institutions as able to mediate between different interests responds to this aim of facilitating inclusion and belonging. As I said before, it is not fair or possible to deny the benefits of political recognition. Nevertheless, the price we have to pay for this secure way of dealing with plurality is a reduced form of recognition. Therefore, we can reasonably inquire after alternatives.

Strong recognition and strong identity are terms used in the text before their in-depth elaboration in Chapter 8. Defining strong recognition proved, in fact, beyond this thesis' scope. For my purposes, strong recognition is considered a regulative idea in the Kantian sense: It '…govern[s] our theoretical activities but offer[s] no (constitutive) guarantees about the objects under investigation.' (G. Williams, 2018) Strong recognition remains a regulative idea because it is impossible for me to characterise it properly, given space constraints. However, I do believe it is definable and real. Detailed characterisation must be reserved for a future project. In this document, I can approach only strong identity with the depth and detail required by academic argumentation.

However, I can offer a notion of strong recognition -without fully justifying it- based on what individuals and groups seem to demand from a more existential form of recognition. Strong recognition is not institutional -although not necessarily in opposition to institutions, because they might and often do coincide in their aims-, it is equally addressed to collectivities and individuals and goes beyond everyday interactions. *It implies a direct recognition of the value of diverse minorities and their difference.* Therefore, it is pre-dialogical and it does not imply the adaptation or modification of behaviours or practices; it does not imply any kind of pragmatic negotiation of identity. It should foster the aim of recognising the value of specific forms of diversity and not only allowing diversity within the framework of liberalism. I

[3] Cited in (Heyes, 2018)

hope the reader can successfully navigate the text with this rudimentary notion of strong recognition.

Strong identity refers to our being as a whole. When I refer to strong identity, I do convey the idea of the organic unit of our existential context, attachments, values, practices, behaviours and agency. At the end of the thesis, I will be able to say that strong identity is an attempt to explain how external factors shape the construction of our self.

1.2 Research objectives and principal findings

The existing literature analysing liberal theories does not explain why they do not fully address problems of identity and recognition. I argue that it is not mainly because they are flawed, but because their liberal nature limits them. Of course it could be alleged that every theory can be gradually perfected, but, in this case, it is a more fundamental limitation. Particularly, the way they understand identity and diversity constrains their possible output. Among the theories considered here, their liberal framework pushes them to focus too much on integration; to believe that conflicts between communities are cultural disagreements, instead of instances of power relations; and/or to condition political recognition to the requirements of social cohesion.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the limitations of liberal and politically-oriented approaches and move towards an alternative. This effort requires relocating part of the analysis and debate from the political to the ontological realm. In consequence, in order to understand how this move towards ontology sheds light on the limits of political plurality, I must clarify what I mean by ontology. I use the term in two ways, depending if 1) I am delimiting the way I approach one topic, particularly identity and recognition or 2) I am developing a critical analysis of a liberal stand. For instance, in the first case, I use ontological to emphasise I am not referring to any particular form or side of identity but *in general*. Ontological is here a synonym of fundamental. In the second case, I use it to underline the assumptions and principles behind the liberal theories, instead of referring to policies, laws or instances of the theory in particular countries.

When I affirm a liberal notion or theoretical argument has to be analysed from the ontological perspective, it means reviewing their inherent assumptions and related intellectual traditions. Identity, recognition, plurality, diversity and social

cohesion are concepts rooted in a broader set of philosophical debates, which shape their use in the political realm. In other words, 'the ontological' refers to the tacit and explicit commitments of the theories I analyse here. Due to this understanding of ontology as concerning the assumptions, I do not focus solely on direct theoretical claims. Rather, I will be able to state that Bhikhu Parekh or Charles Taylor for instance, retain some premises of the liberalism and social contractualism they criticise.[4] This perspective allows me to avoid rigid categorisations that falsely homogenise different perspectives. For example, when referring to multicultural theories, it allows me to explain how critiques of liberalism advance incrementally while we can also identify different liberal traces in each attempt.

The ontological approach is not a novelty; some authors I extensively analyse in the text developed it before. Taylor, Parekh and Kymlicka engage in the philosophical analysis of diversity, social cohesion, identity, liberalism and nationalism along with reviewing particular policies and group differentiated rights in Canada or the UK. Parekh dealt with the consequences of monism in the liberal tradition and Taylor traced the deep problems of recognition to the sources of the modern self. Kymlicka also developed a deeper analysis by spotting the basis of multiculturalism in the tradition of Rawls' new liberalism and its shift to social justice. My work is part of the tradition that periodically re-examines central categories, and its small contribution is mainly in this field.

Every theory has ontological assumptions; any belief has ontological commitments that inevitably guide and limit the theoretical and pragmatic approaches. Ontological assumptions determine the way we apprehend the nature of the entities referred to by our theories. In the liberal tradition, we understand identity and recognition as we do because of the ontological commitments shaping it.[5] In the western philosophical tradition, ontology analyses the construction of relevant categories and their properties in a given reality, as well as determining the conditions to define something as real (Macdonald & Laurence, 1998:1). However, categorisation systems are not only logical and epistemological but also ethical, existential and historical. Therefore, my ontological approach does not limit me to a

[4] We cannot say they are social contractualists because they openly say otherwise, but we can link some of their concerns to that tradition, such as securing social cohesion. Along the same line, they are not liberal in an 'orthodox' sense but some of their proposals are still within the cluster of liberal assumptions and aims (see Chapter 4, section 2).

[5] 'We live in societies that have been shaped by liberal values, in which liberal values have been deeply internalized by most citizens, across ethnic and racial lines, and where liberal values provide the default vocabulary for making political claims on each other.' (Kymlicka,

logical and epistemological analysis of the reality of some phenomenon. Categories and their related assumptions have large implications in the ethical and existential realms, and an ontological analysis of the categories must consider them.

Coming back to the thesis' particular features, I develop my ontological criticism to show the limits of political plurality and enable the construction of strong identity and recognition in the following four objectives.

The first objective is to *explore how the liberal context might prevent stronger forms of recognition from developing*. I explain that liberal theories assume that a civic, western, institutional perspective provides the right conditions for fostering cultural diversity and plurality. I do not claim the opposite but I argue that the liberal perspective obstructs deeper forms of recognition.

As the reader will grasp from the first chapters, there are powerful concerns that have prevented liberal scholars from pursuing more direct forms of recognition, including the strong recognition I will describe. The political realm, without being perfect, is a safer place for western societies to deal with a multiplicity of issues, including identity and recognition. For instance, when features of hegemonic groups are directly recognised as part of the community identity, particularly cultural, ethnic or religious features, it might lead to practices of domination against those unable to meet those requirements. Similarly, it is believed that providing recognition to minority groups outside the liberal political framework could lead to their ghettoisation and promote moral relativism. These are good reasons to keep identity and recognition within the confines the political realm. However, in the thesis I argue this restricted political recognition is valuable but it should not prevent us from venturing beyond its limits and looking for stronger forms of identity and recognition.

There is not much controversy in saying that recognition is understood as a matter of equality in liberal democracies. That is to say, recognising individuals or minority groups as members of a larger community translates into recognising them as *equals,* particularly in terms of rights and citizenship. In this case, equality is understood as in most modern constitutions, that is, as the principle that forces the state to treat any citizen in the same manner as others in similar circumstances. Amongst the theories I consider in this text, civic nationalism and multiculturalism embrace this plausible idea. The problem is a second assumption usually attached to this principle of equality: there is a tendency to think political recognition would eventually lead to other forms of recognition and acceptance; political recognition

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2019:9)

supposedly generates a sort of momentum that extends equality outward. In the particular case of minorities, the idea is that providing political recognition would help to incorporate them *smoothly* into the larger community. In more technical terms, evidence of social cohesion in the larger community, in the form of strong national identities, would confirm that the liberal approach is on the right path to improving integration and securing equality. I will be arguing that this second assumption is not always the case.

Alternatively, interculturalism takes the same idea of recognition as equality and simply refuses to provide it to minority groups.[6] From its more cosmopolitan perspective, equality is something that can only be guaranteed if it is reserved for individuals. Thus, I will be arguing that multiculturalism and civic nationalism only secure political recognition whereas interculturalism directly prevents deep collective recognition.

Determining the consequences and limits of reformist approaches like the liberal ones on issues of identity and recognition is the second objective. According to radical forms of criticism, such as critical race theory, liberal measures of political recognition are essentially reformist approaches that do not fight discrimination and inequality at the source; they just have a sort of palliative effect. In accordance with my own argument, the liberal perspective prevents important changes from happening. Institutional instruments such as anti-discrimination laws or group-differentiated rights are instances of slow-paced reformist *progress* that prevent deeper changes.

We cannot deny that political institutions foster positive changes in social interactions through the rules they introduce. Nevertheless, critical race theory argues that those changes never reach the structure and source of inequalities. Derrick Bell (2000) affirms reformist approaches such as affirmative action bring equality to *some,* but they do not challenge the fundamental assumption of white privilege. He argues that pursuing middle range changes instead of radical ones aim to calm minorities' demands without jeopardising the benefits of elites and majorities. Additionally, the liberal perspective argues that the sources of conflict are

[6] Many times in this text, it will be necessary to distinguish between Québec and European interculturalism. However, this last affirmation is true for both. European interculturalism openly leaves aside recognition of the minorities in favour of a more direct interaction between individuals. Québec interculturalism *recognises* and protects the francophone culture as the societal base for the host community. However, the same recognition and protection is not extended to the minority groups. In regards to the minorities, Québec interculturalism also focuses on interaction.

not based on structural conditions, placing them instead in individual and collective prejudice. It is believed that reducing prejudice and improving everyday interaction is safer than a direct and positive recognition of people's identity. Critical race theory is effective at bringing the issues of reformist approach into the spotlight. Nevertheless, I think we can go beyond this and develop a proposal for the situations denounced correctly by CRT.

Another objective is to *assess how ideas about social cohesion are intertwined with ideas about identity and recognition.* Social cohesion is basically the idea that members of a group should develop strong ties. In terms of importance, there is a tendency in some liberal thought to consider the need for social unity in modern states first; only later is collective identity considered as a way to achieve it. This produces the impression that, in order to secure social cohesion, a form of social glue should be shaped through collective identity. I will argue that the distinction between ethnic and civic forms of nationalism draws on this idea. According to the latter, since modern communities are not 'natural', their bond can be culturally and politically formed. In consequence, some ways of understanding identity are shaped by the way liberals believe social cohesion should be achieved. Particularly in liberal perspectives emphasising collective identity -national identity for instance-, an allegiance-recognition dynamic is created in which political recognition is provided only in exchange for social allegiance.

Additionally, the effort to secure enough room for a sentiment of belonging to minority groups, without detriment to the cohesion of the larger political community, is one of the main aims of multiculturalism. The same sentiment of belonging to the national group is argued to be possible for individuals in civic nationalism. In these liberal theories, individuals and members of minorities can integrate better into the mainstream polity if the proper sentiment of belonging is developed. They achieve this by constructing a civic culture outside any particular ethnicity, race or religion, making it accessible to everyone. Anyone can belong to a multicultural nation if they adopt the shared civic culture, thus fostering inclusion and diversity. However, I will be arguing that the civic culture is not only a collection of principles and values; it includes many more existential, historical and symbolic commitments that also determine the definition of collective identity. Scholars like Iris Marion Young (1990) have highlighted that privileged groups have used the idea of a neutral civic culture to impose their specificity as the standard, an argument in the same vein as my own.

On the other side, cosmopolitan approaches also look to secure social cohesion and solidarity, but in contrast to the civic nationalist and multicultural approaches, it is not through a civic-shared identity but through mutual understanding. In general, from the cosmopolitan perspective, globalisation and liberalisation are processes pushing individuals outside the framework of collective identities. Individual identity should be enough to secure social cohesion. Interculturalism argues that social cohesion will be the result of reducing prejudice between members of different groups. I will argue that this particular objective shows, on one hand, the conditioning of diversity and plurality by some formal requirements and, on the other hand, the problems in considering that cohesion resides in the individual and their ability to tolerate the other.

A fourth objective is to *develop a notion of ontological identity and investigate its relationship with agency.* If my argument is correct and liberal and political approaches prevent stronger claims for recognition, then the first step in addressing that problem is to develop a notion of strong identity that corresponds to those claims. Of course, other concepts of identity are valid in many ways. However, as long as they are shaped by notions of modern identity, they fall short of securing strong recognition. Other features are possible for other ways of understanding identity in specific contexts and under certain circumstances. For instance, I argue that strong identity is not open to pragmatic negotiation or adjustment, which does not mean we cannot negotiate or adapt our behaviours and practices in specific situations and for different reasons.

An important source of worry for liberals, as well as post-modern scholars, is that defending a form of strong identity implies: first, the assumption of a conservative posture; second, the essentialising of something that is fluid and dynamic; and, third, denying identity's constructed 'nature' and, therefore, denying agency. All these claims must be carefully addressed. However, I will argue that strong recognition as described here does not attempt any of these. I believe that supporting a strong notion of identity is not the same as claiming it is fixed or denying its dialogic and socially constructed character.

Following Taylor's definition of identity as the *understanding* of who we are, we can affirm that such understanding is shaped by our cultural framework. In a way, he affirms both cultural attachments and individual agency as equally important for identity. Therefore, it is not one or the other. We are culturally determined and, at the same time, able to freely construct our identity. I will argue that strong identity

refers to what we are, as a whole, as an organic unit. It is not a resource we have, nor a possession. It is neither a property nor a relation, but our being. We do not *have* an identity, nor multiple identities, but a complex unified identity that includes everything that we are. Finally, I will propose a humanism of the other as a way to go beyond the limits of agency and understanding regarding identity.

Taking into account the objectives of the research, our main findings resume in 1) political recognition does not provide a direct recognition of the value of groups or individuals, it provides the room for recognition 2) social cohesion in the ontological sense is not sharing values or practices but sharing identity as horizon, 3) political recognition is a form of recognition without *the other* and, 4) strong identity refers to our being, to the articulation of all the things we can change or ourselves, those we cannot change and those we want to change.

1.3 Structure

In Chapter 2, I present critical race theory (CRT) as a prominent critique of the liberal theories I analyse next. I use it to exemplify some more abstract issues raised in the following chapters: equal protection, neutrality and difference-blindness. In particular, it clarifies why state institutions are a main target for critiques of liberal principles and notions. Liberalism cannot be reduced to the political institutions linked to it; however, CRT unveils how the liberal narrative finds its natural means of expression in state institutions. Criticising political institutions is an indirect but meaningful way of criticising liberalism. CRT argues through the notions of *integrationist convergence, racial realism, differential racialisation* and *racial consciousness* that inequalities are inherent in liberal structure. In more detail, in this chapter I describe the basic features of CRT and its fundamental notions: racial realism shows that discrimination is not aberrational but structural; the integrationist convergence thesis argues that the function of liberal institutions is to protect the interest of particular groups; differential racialisation unveils the way minority groups are defined according to other groups' interests; and racial consciousness demonstrates that racism does not start with an identification in racial terms. Subsequently, I use these notions to build an argument that liberal societies are not free of uneven power relations, oppression and privilege. I also describe some consequences of the reformist approach assumed by liberal societies and the limitations it imposes on a structural change. Liberal theories

assume oppression and domination are the results of ignorance and illiberal ideologies, which in the vocabulary of CRT corresponds to the *integrationist ideology*. This perspective leads to an *empathic fallacy* that makes us believe that discrimination will end when the oppressor is persuaded of their mistake. Therefore, I particularly emphasise CRT's effort to conceptualise racism and oppression outside the narratives of incidental and ignorant behaviours. Finally, I assess the contributions and limitations of CRT.

In Chapter 3, I argue that contemporary ideas of shared political identity are closely connected to theories of nationalism. In particular, civic nationalism provides the ideological foundation for modern plurality, doing so by placing identity and recognition within the political realm. At the same time that civic nations provide political recognition, they demand their members' allegiance to the values and institutions of the community. As a consequence, there is a dialectic of diversity in which members of the communities are conditioned to develop an attachment to political values in return for political recognition. This dialectical relation shapes two important notions: social cohesion and national identity. National identity is seen as the answer to the question of what keeps members within a nation together, that is, the answer to the problem of how to foster social cohesion amongst the different individuals. I also analyse two characteristics of civic nationalism that shape political recognition: liberal democracy and liberal political practices and values. At the end of the chapter I can affirm that political recognition is expressed by institutions, through legal means and encapsulated in political rights and policies, which is the first step to questioning the limits of this approach.

Multicultural theories are the main topic of Chapters 4 & 5. In Chapter 4, I delineate the main aims of multiculturalism, its context and proposals. I then explore different criticisms of the approach in Chapter 5. In general terms, I portray multiculturalism's efforts to expand the liberal framework in which we understand diversity and plurality. In order to achieve this, in Chapter 4 I describe how the notion of group-differentiated rights challenges the idea of uniform application of policies and norms, how communitarian multiculturalism argues there is no need for state neutrality and, the way scholars such as Parekh emphasise liberalism is just one option for organising social life. The other argument in Chapter 4 is that multiculturalism focuses on the same problem of securing social cohesion and collective identity as theories of nationalism. Additionally, it proposes the same solution: national identity should be fostered to provide the conditions for political

plurality and social cohesion. Multicultural national identity is more complex than its traditional counterpart: it tries to keep together members through a shared political identity while simultaneously allowing them to develop their own national identity or ethnic particularity. As such, I explain how multiculturalism is a form of nationalism.

I analyse some criticisms in Chapter 5, focusing on those that are not addressing multiculturalism's purported practical failure or the backlash against it. I mainly argue that multiculturalism has fallen short not because it is flawed, but because its liberal tone limits its reach. More specifically, I analyse the claim that multiculturalism essentialises groups. I suggest that this is not intrinsically problematic, as some sort of essentialisation is unavoidable in any theory; however, what is problematic is the essentialising of members into general categories found in the liberal societies in which multiculturalism operates.

The second main idea of this chapter is that multiculturalism becomes a project constrained by the notion that minority groups must be integrated into the mainstream culture. The way this is developed reduces multiculturalism's scope to secure recognition and equality into relationships of integration processes. I point out some problems derived from the categorisation of culture, nation and people, which are crucial for multiculturalism. Additionally, I argue that the majority-minority dichotomy is not about numbers but power. Finally, I investigate why multiculturalism conceptualises hierarchies and inequalities as arising from illiberal ideologies, leading it to assume that conflicts between majorities and minorities are consequences of cultural differences and not power struggles.

Chapters 6 & 7 couple together under the same topic: interculturalism. They also follow the same general structure as the former ones: Chapter 6 describes the features, typology and proposals of interculturalism, while Chapter 7 develops a more critical approach. In general terms, I develop the idea that interculturalism neither secures a strong recognition of the other, nor deals with identity at the fundamental level. Additionally, it does not solve the recurrent issues of social cohesion and collective identity. In these chapters, I introduce some notions of identity that I properly justify in Chapter 8 but that help us to perceive the limits of modern, individualised identity in the particular context of interculturalism. I claim that identity is not something we can negotiate or pragmatically adjust, as interculturalism assumes. Identity refers to what we are, as a whole. It is not a resource we can use or exercise, Therefore, arguing that interculturalism has a pragmatic view allows me to affirm that it deals with practices but not with identities.

In Chapter 6, I contend that interculturalism argues for the urgency of addressing issues of cross-cultural interactions. Then, I portray two forms of interculturalism: Québécois and European. Québécois interculturalism openly embraces the Francophone culture as the base for minorities' integration, while European interculturalism insists on a neutral and universal framework. Both approaches propose developing skills for positive interactions, avoiding categorisation -fluid identity-, and reducing prejudice. I particularly pay attention to intercultural dialogue as a way to develop positive interactions between individuals and groups. This leads me to a key point of this chapter: interculturalism assumes that social cohesion is achieved by reducing prejudice between members of different groups, which implies some limitations in its understanding of recognition. I also analyse the claim that there is a new form of diversity, super-diversity, that appears along with globalisation and that this has implications for liberal theories of diversity and plurality. I argue that super-diversity is not a qualitatively different kind of diversity and it is mistaken in denying the allegiance of individuals to the communities.

I analyse issues of Québécois interculturalism in the first half of Chapter 7 and in the second half those of European interculturalism. Within these discussions, I develop two connected arguments. I present the premise of a principle of reciprocity in Québécois interculturalism and the concerns that majorities voice to justify it. I then argue that anxieties of minority and majority groups are qualitatively different. Reciprocity is essentially pragmatic and prevents a true attempt at understanding the other. Additionally, majorities use it to justify a form of controlled interventionism over minorities; they say that interventionism is okay as long it stays within the liberal framework and follows dialogic processes. However, I debunk this idea. Lastly, I follow scholars such as Iris Marion Young (1990) to argue that the notion of dialogue is unavoidably idealised.

In the second half of Chapter 7, I describe the reasons why European interculturalism does not address strong forms of identity and consider some consequences. I pay attention to the problems derived from trying to develop a grassroots approach from a universal framework. I propose two different notions of community: community as togetherness and community as likeness. I justify this proposal by showing that recognition of collective identities is conditioned by the idea of community we assume. Likeness enables an idea of individual self-sufficiency and emphasises universal features. Togetherness leads to a stronger

dependency on collectivities and more concrete understandings of identity. Subsequently, I argue that European interculturalism is based on the idea of likeness more than the notion of togetherness. Additionally, I investigate the conditions for living together in a meaningful way. Finally, I explore the fears of relativism in the liberal tradition, and I claim that the tendency to universalism can be explained by this fear, to the point that European interculturalism refuses to provide recognition to particular groups because from its perspective that leads to moral relativism.

In Chapter 8 I develop the idea of strong identity, as an initial move beyond liberal approaches, engaging particularly with Taylor's work. I argue that the philosophical context of liberalism explains why and how we understand diversity and plurality, particularly in liberal politics. Taylor's definition of identity as the *understanding* of who we are allows him to affirm that our cultural framework is the foundation for human agency, for the reason that it structures our understanding. Moreover, he argues that our identity is shaped by the recognition or misrecognition of others. I take these ideas to establish that our identity is both, individual and collective without any contradiction; I argue that our identity is our being, which includes both the free and individual construction of ourselves and the attachments to groups. The dialectical and dialogic nature of identity construction does not contradict or prevent agency. Then, I insist on the existential context of our agency and individuality, especially when we question our goods and ends. I outline how *a humanism of the other and the related politics of difference-identity* would help us move beyond the limits of modern identity, which means to expand identity beyond the limits of agency and understanding. Even when our identity is clearly constructed there are 'parts' that are given. This implies that our construction becomes an endless process in which we change 'parts' and leave others. Finally, I link individual identity construction with the collective formation of history. I claim that constructing our identity is constructing the world as a horizon. Therefore, I argue that communities follow the same dynamics of adjusting in a unitary articulation but they do not do it because their members follow or embrace values, goods and practices. Instead, they are part of a community because they live the same articulation of events from similar horizons.

Chapter 2

Critical race theory: a radical critique of liberalism

Like many other Mexican middle-class families in the 90s, after the prime time show at dinnertime, we used to watch the news before going to bed. One night in 1992, after the anchorman advised discretion to the viewers, I watched what seemed to be warehouses and stores set on fire. I particularly remember the orange flames contrasting with the black night, people running in the middle of the street throwing rocks with others carrying appliances. It was footage of the 1992 LA riots. Immediately afterwards, they showed a video of a black man named Rodney King being beaten up by white police officers outside a car, alongside a mugshot showing his severely disfigured face. Everything was connected, but in those few minutes of news coverage, it was hard to know exactly how. The riots began a few hours after an almost entirely white jury acquitted the police officers of assault and excessive force charges. That was the first time I got a vague idea of the circumstances of the African-American community in the US.

During the next years, I connected the dots, one by one. I heard about systematic oppression, disadvantage and stereotypes from many different sources -books, movies, music, news-, including the few words I could understand listening to N.W.A and Public Enemy describing black people suffering systematic police harassment. Then, the first day of 1994 the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) rose up in arms and the systematic oppression, disadvantage and stereotypes directed to the indigenous communities in my country unveiled a sort of existential revelation. Everything else was pieces falling into place: anti-globalisation demonstrations, university strikes, Zapatismo, protest songs, feminism, demands for recognition and Rage Against the Machine. Everything made sense. Eventually, I found more and more theoretical support for this articulation of different notions. But it was already there: the certainty that oppression was not incidental but systematic,

an equally strong conviction that everything was established for them to win and for us to lose and, of course, a deep distrust in state institutions. A video of white police officers beating up an African-American man was not shocking anymore, it was just an example of the systematic oppression of minorities. Critical race theory (CRT) expresses in a theoretical way the concerns and suspicions of a generation that grew up seeing the world claiming to make progress and, at the same time, leaving a substantial number of us behind with empty promises of recognition and dignity.

CRT represents an effective way to critique liberal theories of plurality and diversity. It is particularly useful to illustrate some ideas that I will develop later from a more theoretical perspective; it allows us to see historical instances of systematic oppression and how liberal narratives nevertheless argue for neutrality and universality. Additionally, it unveils how liberal efforts in fighting oppression and bringing equality to minority groups fail because of the nature of its institutions. Liberalism is not institutionalism or vice-versa. However, the particular form I call *liberal institutionalism* is a door to articulate a critique on the limits of liberalism itself. A radical critique of liberal institutions paves the way for a more systematic analysis of problems in the theoretical scaffolding of liberal ideologies. This is possible because CRT does not push for reform of liberal institutions; it exposes how the principles behind them misdirect the struggles of minority groups. Instead of neutral and difference-blind institutions, some minorities demand racial consciousness and group-differentiated rights.

CRT and the liberal theories of plurality and diversity are similar in some respects, such as their positive portrayal of diversity. On the other hand, even if both analyse occurrences of bigotry, intolerance and discrimination directed towards minority groups in western democracies, their interpretation is irreconcilable in crucial aspects. The differences start from what each perspective understands as the origin of inequality and domination.

In general, the liberal approach assumes oppression and domination are the results of ignorance and illiberal ideologies. In consequence, we should fight racism and other forms of oppression by ending ignorance and educating people in the principles of liberal thought. This is an idea that clearly bears a resemblance to the Enlightenment's trust in reason and its key role in the realisation of freedom and equality, through rational, secular, neutral and difference-blind institutions. In the liberal context, racism can be a collective and historical phenomenon. However,

ultimately, it resides in the individuals. Referring to the way white liberal thinkers embraced this Enlightenment assumption, Gary Peller mentions:

> In other words, most white liberals and progressives, projecting themselves as the enlightened avant garde of the white community, automatically associated race nationalism with the repressive history of white supremacy, and never developed either a consciousness or a political practice that comprehended racial identity and power as centrally formative factors in American social relations. (1990:761)

On the contrary, CRT argues through the notions of *integrationist convergence*, *racial realism* and *racial consciousness* that inequalities, especially racism, are part of the structure of liberal societies and its institutions.

The chapter is divided into 6 sections before its Conclusion. It goes from describing fundamental CRT concepts to a brief criticism of their limitations. In the first three sections I portray the basic concepts. I describe how *racial realism* unveils discrimination as something experienced on a daily basis by minorities, opposing the *integrationist ideology* of the civil right movement, which assumes racial oppression was the result of prejudice and stereotypes. I analyse the *integrationist convergence thesis,* which argues that the *real* function of liberal institutions has been to protect the interests of particular groups. Additionally, I present some problems deriving from the liberal effort to prevent *racial consciousness*. The third section is devoted to portraying the notions of *differential racialisation* and the *ad hoc* construction of categories, which make explicit the way each minority group has been defined according to interests of the majority group. In Sections 4 and 5 I use these notions to construct my argument against systematic power, oppression and privilege in liberal societies; I also analyse the consequences of a reformist approach and the possibilities for structural change. Finally, in the last section, I assess the contributions and limitations of CRT, particularly its effort to place the debate on racism and oppression outside the discourses of incidental and ignorant behaviours and its recent turn to a more idealist perspective.

At the end of the chapter, I hope we have enough elements to seriously ask ourselves if societies should support integrationist reforms for minority recognition within the framework of liberal principles, or should be pushing a paradigm shift that places diversity outside the boundaries of liberalism or, even better, perhaps we should embrace a diversity of paradigms co-existing. In other words, we can wonder whether reformist progress, represented by group-differentiated rights, intercultural policies, and civic citizenship is enough or we should push other structural modifications.

2.1 Racial realism and the integrationist ideology

CRT started with the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in the 1970s concerned with the slow pace of and backlash against the civil right movement achievements, facing it with the perspective of racial realism. In greater detail, Bell and Freeman were interested in understanding and fighting forms of racism hiding behind claims of colour-blindness and neutrality in American institutions, particularly in the legal system. Their basic hypothesis asserts that the law's instrumental purpose is to protect a racial hierarchical system. Inspired by Legal Realism, '…[that] challenged the classical structure of law as a formal group of common-law rules that, if properly applied to any given situation, lead to a right –and therefore just- result.' (Derrick Bell, 1992:364), CRT generated a perspective called racial realism. This standpoint incorporated as a key element the fact that, in spite of the efforts of the civil rights movement and legal triumphs like *Brown v. Board of Education*, African-Americans had never been considered equals and probably *never would be* under the current social structure. In other words, CRT started denouncing an extended network of racial inequalities, including institutional racism, while also rejecting the impossible aim of pursuing racial equality through means that were intended to maintain those privileges in the first place. In the powerful words of the poet, Audre Lorde: 'For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.' (1984b:112)

According to CRT's founders, the belief of racial equality within the current social and political structures implies a *naive* perspective that has negative effects for black communities. Scholars like Bell, Freeman and Delgado claim that racial equality enshrined in the law does not correspond to the reality of the US, moreover, it cannot be achieved without radical structural change. A rhetoric, suggest that equality, freedom and social justice would be achieved gradually through laws and policies, conceals the reality of the everyday racist behaviours in American history. (Wallace, 2003). Instead, CRT advocates advise African-Americans to embrace a *realist* angle to fight the oppression they suffer. As Bell affirms:

> It is time we concede that a commitment to racial equality merely perpetuates our disempowerment. Rather, we need a mechanism to make life bearable in a society where blacks are a permanent, subordinate class. Our empowerment lies in recognizing that Racial Realism may open the gateway to attaining a more meaningful status. (1992:377).

Racial realism is an attempt to unveil the factual situation of people of colour in the US rather than following idyllic narratives of racial equality; it is *an attempt to look for structural changes instead of institutional reforms*. However, it is worth mentioning that many scholars, especially liberal egalitarians,[7] would argue that structural changes are exactly those pushed through by institutions. There is a tight link between structures and institutions evidenced by the fact that these terms are quite often used interchangeably.[8] Keeping aside the debates that might take place in different theories on institutionalism, following Geoffrey Hodgson and 'Without doing much violence to the relevant literature, we may define institutions as systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions.' (2006:2) Therefore, it is normal to believe that the way to achieve structural changes finds its way through institutions; if institutions structure social interactions and generate social rules, then structural changes would be necessarily institutional. In contrast, CRT argues that the adjustments made by institutions such as the legal system, do not allow but actually avert *real* structural changes. Let me clarify.

CRT does not deny that institutions can foster positive changes in social interactions through the social rules they introduce, that is, it is a possibility included in its attributes. Nevertheless, those changes never reach the structure and source of inequalities. They have never done so because that would be contrary to their real aim. The role of institutions is to maintain control of particular groups by others. In any event, for the purposes of this chapter, it is enough to highlight CRT's effort to deny any sort of integrationist goal that ultimately would decrease the chances of radical social changes. As Tommy Curry sustains: 'In its inception, CRT offered a withering critique of integrationism and exposed the hope of racial equality for Blacks in America as nothing more than a mere illusion.' (2011:1)

The first works that shaped the theoretical ground for the movement analysed the idea of the legal system as a means to construct and maintain white privilege. Bell's *Serving Two Masters: Integration Ideals and Client Interests in*

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[7] There is a tendency to emphasise institutions' role and strength, particularly amongst liberal egalitarian thinkers. Following Rawl's theory of distributive justice, they usually underline Rawls's fundamental position that egalitarian distributive justice only functions at the state level. A further discussion of this topic can be found in (Blake & Smith, 2015)

[8] Steve Fleetwood provides a detailed description of some similarities and differences between the two terms, as well as their relationship. In general, the idea of a change produced from the structure follows the next pattern: 'It is likely that social structures "effect", "influence" or "shape" institutions (rules, conventions, norms, values and customs) which, in turn, cause the emergence of a habitus that, in some sense, "reflects" or "expresses" these social structures. Social structures have a causal role to play in generating the *habitus*, but only *indirectly* via institutions and, I might add, *organisations*.' (2008:261)

School Desegregation Litigation (1976) and *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma* (1980), as well as Freeman's *Legitimizing Racial Discrimination Through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Doctrine* (1978) examine the way the legal system had allowed and fostered racism in the US. In these influential works, Bell and Freeman questioned important mainstays and deep assumptions of the American legal system, like equal protection, neutrality and a difference-blind point-of-view. It is here where the connection with liberal theories of plurality and diversity describe later becomes more evident. As I describe in Chapter 3, the basis for political pluralism is built mainly on the liberal principles of equality and neutrality. Institutions establish their legitimacy by appealing to the idea that they are neutral and difference-blind. Only in such circumstances can they claim to impartially mediate different interests.

Since the beginning of the CRT movement, *equal protection, neutrality and difference-blind* have been criticised in their standard meaning, that is, as they are used in the first section of the fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution. They are fundamental values founded on citizenship, which forces the state to treat any citizen in the same manner as others in similar circumstances. In other words, those values force states to govern impartially. By questioning them, CRT criticises both institutions' impartiality and their effectiveness in fighting racism. In words of Anthony Cook, 'Racist traditions, thought patterns, and behavior cannot be eliminated either with the passage of a "color-blind" statute or by a court ruling prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race under the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment.' (1990:1041) Early CRT scholars examined particularly the role parts of the legal system had in maintaining the subordination of black people. As a result, after this inaugural impetus, CRT scholars developed their theories and criticisms based on two fundamental notions, known in the movement as *race consciousness* and *racial realism.*

From a historical perspective, CRT expresses a frustration derived from the civil rights discourse. It holds that the civil right movement did not embrace a sufficiently radical approach to racial issues; the critique especially underlines the quasi-universal stance it gradually assumed. Gary Peller affirms that: 'The reappearance and refinement of race consciousness in many critical race theory works symbolizes the break with the dominant civil rights discourse.' (1990:758). Early CRT scholars admit that the traditional civil rights discourse was a collection of ideas about racial power and social transformation that yielded somewhat positive

results for black communities. Nevertheless, its core belief that racism was no more than a prejudice based on skin colour led, in their opinion, to the de-radicalisation and ineffectiveness of the liberation movements based on it (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995:xv). Peller named this belief behind civil rights discourse *integrationist ideology*, and as far as it assumes that racial oppression is the result of prejudice and stereotypes based on skin colour, it also anticipated that discrimination would end by encouraging the transcendence of skin colour considerations or racial consciousness (1990:770).

In Chapters 6 and 7 I point out that the perspective assumed by European interculturalism and its support of contact theory falls short of addressing issues of ontological identity and stronger forms of recognition, precisely because it takes for granted that discrimination and lack of recognition are results of ignorance and stereotypes. While several differences separate the institutional approach of European interculturalism and the civil rights movement, their conceptual structures also coincide in important respects: they share the same *integrationist ideology*. I argue later on those chapters that interculturalism is not enough to claim we are truly living together. CRT goes further in its criticism of the civil rights movement and unveils a deeper consequence: *integrationist ideology* leads to the de-radicalisation of social movements. It is clear that my view is in favour of more radical forms of identity, recognition and, consequently, social movements. However, I acknowledge that this is a real impasse.

Liberals would argue that the institutional and slow pace changes behind the integrationist ideology are exactly what allows the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups, securing democracy and political plurality. In other words, western societies have developed a complex political system precisely to prevent the risk of radicalisation, which can easily lead to violence or cleanse ethnic or religious diversity. Elaboration upon exactly where the thin line between a legitimate claim pushed in a radical way and when it is too much stands is the subject for another text. In this one, I argue for a more radical understanding of identity and recognition in an ontological sense.

Critical Legal Studies, the predecessor of CRT, focused its critiques on what they called legal *liberalism.*[9] The American legal system in particular, but *mutatis mutandis* all western democracies, assumed the perspective of legal liberalism, that is, the belief that the law is clearly distinct from politics and that the latter shall be

[9] For an account of the debate between legal liberalism and CRT see (Price, 1989)

constrained by the former. The liberal framework pretends to shield institutions from being contaminated with particular political or ideological interests in order to erect them as the proper mediators in political, racial or ideological conflicts. Therefore, neutrality, objectivity, and some sort of universalism are the *sine qua non* conditions for western democracies and their institutions and, as I will show in the next chapter, this is the same idea developed in theories of nationalism.

In the legal system, the integrationist ideology found expression in the concepts of colour-blindness, equal opportunity and meritocracy. In the classical liberal contexts, all these categories, being neutral, impersonal, unrelated to social power and disconnected from racial privilege, could eliminate prejudices and racial discrimination by removing racial consciousness.[10] Although it can be a matter of serious debate if the civil rights movement was indeed supporting colour-blindness as its core or if it misrepresents some of Martin Luther King Jr's speeches, the constant criticism from other black movements served to build a case for how racial consciousness was not the origin of racism, but part of its solution. For instance, at the same time that the criticism of the civil rights discourse was developing in the legal system, racism was defined for practical purposes within the institutions as the recognition of race; the idea of racism was almost completely constructed as opposed to colour-blindness. In consequence, liberation movements looking for cultural and ethnic recognition found themselves facing a dead-end represented by the supposed racial and cultural neutrality of American institutions. In the words of Young

> If oppressed groups challenge the alleged neutrality of prevailing assumptions and policies and express their own experience and perspectives, their claims are heard as those of biased, selfish special interests that deviate from the impartial general interest. Commitment to an ideal of impartiality thus makes it difficult to expose the partiality of the supposedly general standpoint, and to claim a voice for the oppressed. (1990:116)

On the one hand, African-Americans continued to be systematically oppressed but, on the other, are deprived of the possibility to use their own ethnic and cultural heritage to oppose that oppression. 'History has shown that the most valuable political asset of the Black community has been its ability to assert a collective identity and to name its collective political reality. Liberal reform discourse

[10] From the liberal perspective, there is also the possibility to understand neutrality as a feature of the definition of race itself. As Neil Gotanda points out, formal concepts '…are seen as neutral, apolitical descriptions, reflecting merely "skin color" or country of ancestral origin. Formal-race is unrelated to ability, disadvantage, or moral culpability.' (1991:4) Fortunately, this internal neutrality has been almost completely discredited.

must not be allowed to undermine the Black collective identity.' (Crenshaw, 2011:250)[11] Additionally, CRT has drawn attention to the false universalism assumed by white people in the US, supported by the fact they do not perceive themselves as part of a race, but plainly as people.

This brief account of racial realism and the integrationist ideology allows me to underline how CRT criticism reinforces ideas I develop in other chapters. Universality, neutrality and liberal politics fall short, and in this case prevent, a deeper recognition of African-Americans. The integrationist image of the law as neutral and impersonal coincides with the universal aims of liberalism. In other words, the integrationist ideology overlaps with the liberal tradition and it extensively uses the theoretical tools of liberalism to justify itself. In fact, integrationist ideology is an expression of liberal politics. Both believe that only when neutrality and objectivity are secured for the state institutions can everyone truly enjoy equal treatment or at least equal opportunities.

2.2 Integrationist convergence and racial consciousness

Early in the movement, the notion of race consciousness and the perspective of racial realism derived theoretically from Bell's thesis of *integrationist convergence*, which claims that 'The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites.' (Derrick Bell, 1980:523) This proposition points out that, in the abstract, black and white integrationist liberals agree that protection for minority groups against racial discrimination is needed, but, in effect, any protection occurs just to the extent that some external circumstances labelled 'the interest of whites' allow it. All the more so, Bell's idea of integrationist convergence suggests that any modification in race relations is preceded by a concern for protecting white privilege, not eradicating it.

Bell states that an emblematic case like *Brown v. Board of Education* and its subsequent corollaries cannot be explained as a purely moral commitment to equality and desegregation. In other words, court decisions on racial matters did not

[11] Other issues appear when we try to foster collective identity and unity. The black community struggles to replicate this idea of unity within its structure. 'Within Black communities where racism is a living reality, differences among us often seem dangerous and suspect. The need for unity is often misnamed as a need for homogeneity, and a Black feminist vision mistaken for betrayal of our common interests as a people.' (Lorde, 1984a:119)

reflect any moral shift within American society or the output of a new socio-political ideology, not even liberalism -as opposed to conservatism-; instead, they mainly look to protect the existing social configuration. As Freeman asserts: 'The challenge for the law, therefore, was to develop, through the usual legal techniques of verbal manipulation, ways of breaking out the formal constraints of the perpetrator perspective while maintaining ostensible adherence to the form itself.' (1978:1056-57) In support of this idea, Linda Greene (1995) analyses legal cases where the Supreme Court uses language that seems concerned with achieving equality, but the reasoning seems indifferent to particular cases and the impact of court decisions on victims of racial discrimination. In brief, from the institutional apparatus, discrimination is not the main motivation behind the pursuit of anti-discrimination laws and policies.

From their own perspective and through their own means, more radical movements such as Black Nationalism or the Black Panthers Party have had emphasised the same lack of confidence in the liberal nature of the legal system. Malcolm X says:

> He [an African American nationalist] doesn't see any progress that he has made since the Civil War. He sees not one iota of progress because, number one, if the Civil War had freed him, he wouldn't need civil-rights legislation today. If the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by that great shining liberal called Lincoln, had freed him, he wouldn't be singing "We Shall Overcome" today. If the amendments to the Constitution had solved his problem, his problem wouldn't still be here today. And if the Supreme Court desegregation decision of 1954 was genuinely and sincerely designed to solve his problem, his problem wouldn't be with us today. (…) He can see where every maneuver that America has made, supposedly to solve this problem, has been nothing but political trickery and treachery of the worst order. Today he doesn't have any confidence in these so-called liberals. (X, 1990:52-53)

Specifically, Bell argues that *Brown v. Board of Education's* sudden shift that for the first time modified almost one hundred years of legal defeats in fighting discriminatory policies can only be explained taking into account socio-historical situations denoting the integrationist convergence thesis. For instance, policymakers perceived economic and political advantages in preventing segregation. The urgency in stopping the discontent growing in African-American WWII veterans, or the perception that southern states' industrialisation was impossible if segregation remained (Derrick Bell, 1980:524-526), amongst other considerations, revealing a complex net of political and economic interests particular to certain groups. Bell's call to review legal cases from the integrationist convergence perspective can be understood as a petition to place court decisions in their *factual* historical and

political context, instead of an *idealised* discourse that sees the achievements in fighting discrimination as the natural result of western progress and enlightened reason. Scholars like Mary Dudziak echo this claim:

> The failure to contextualize Brown reinforces the sense that the movement against segregation somehow happened in spite of everything else that was going on. During a period when civil liberties and social change were repressed in other contexts, somehow, some way, Brown managed to happen. (1988:64)

Additionally, the influences that can explain *Brown* go beyond the limits of the American context. From a geopolitical perspective, *Brown* was influenced by circumstances like the growing tension between the US and communist countries, particularly predisposed by the fear that social discomfort would result in the sprout of communist ideologies. Some historians and political scientists have provided evidence of Bell's integrationist convergence thesis through geopolitical analyses. Manfred Berg mentions that

> …the global ideological confrontation between Communism and liberal democracy and the claim by the United States to leadership of the "free world" made domestic racial discrimination an international embarrassment, providing the civil rights movement with a potent discursive weapon. (…) Cold War liberals embraced racial reform as a national security imperative. (2007:75)

Moving forward, the idea of an integrationist convergence can be applied beyond the boundaries of the American case without much trouble; it falls within wider critical perspectives that have denounced the problems of liberal principles in providing proper recognition to minority groups. Perspectives under the umbrella term of *politics of difference* have criticised liberal democracies from various standpoints, some of which coincide with CRT analyses. Difference blindness and the idea of universal humanity, allows privileged groups to ignore their own group specificity and create neutral standards, leading to internalised devaluations in individuals that cannot fulfil them (Young, 1990:164-65).

If integrationist convergence is right, there are at least two consequences. First, neutrality and other liberal notions are ineffective in fighting deep discrimination and, more importantly, they actually prevent us from accessing these roots. It is difficult to argue that liberal theories on diversity and plurality are consciously supported by institutions to sustain the status quo for a determined group. However, it is not so hard to claim they could be preventing us from producing deeper changes. We can keep questioning if multiculturalism, interculturalism and nationalism are ineffective frameworks to fight structural oppression, but we can also question if they perpetuate inequality in a way the

integrationist convergence hypothesis predicts. Unfortunately, it is beyond my current scope and skills to construct a complete genealogy of liberal attempts to foster plurality that might unveil an underlying aim to protect particular interests. However, I can affirm liberal policies are pushed only to the extent that some groups do not give up their privileged status, at least majorities.

In relation to the liberal theories I analyse in the text, the easiest case in this respect is nationalism, in which elites have been widely identified as a key actor in the formation of modern nations (Greenfeld, 1993). After all, despite the official discourse of enlightened liberal ideals as the foundation of modern democracies, the factual historical circumstances show that, like in the case of the US, 'This was accomplished by 55 middle-aged white gentlemen of the highest rank and property, closeted together in private for two weeks in Philadelphia.' (Mann, 2005:56) In the case of Québécois interculturalism, I argue in Chapter 7, how the 'majority anxieties' caused by migration are mostly fears of giving up privileges which they tried to theoretically justify, as any good liberal perspective would, with notions of reciprocity and neutrality. In the same chapter, I describe how European interculturalism prevents forms of diversity outside the liberal sphere in attempting to avoid relativism, allowing the standpoint of the privileged to appear universal. The case of multiculturalism is more complex because, to some extent, it challenges the idea of neutrality and difference-blindness with the notion of group-differentiated rights; here, it is harder to say multiculturalism seeks to safeguard a state of affairs benefitting a certain group. Again, I have no resources to demonstrate whether multicultural policies resulted in the perpetuation of inequality. But its emphasis on the political sphere and liberal principles prevents other forms of plurality.

In the middle of this complex net of what I can question, what I can just suspect and what I can affirm, there are two statements I find particularly important: 1) the liberal approaches on diversity and plurality do not seem to reflect a change in the moral commitment of western societies and 2) we can doubt whether plurality's achievement originates in enlightened reason and liberalisation processes.[12]

[12] For instance, Kymlicka says: 'After World War II, however, the world recoiled against Hitler's fanatical and murderous use of such [racialist] ideologies, and the United Nations decisively repudiated them in favor of a new ideology of the equality of races and peoples. And *this new assumption of human equality generated a series of political movements designed to contest the lingering presence or enduring effects of older hierarchies.* We can distinguish three "waves" of such movements: 1) the struggle for decolonization, concentrated in the period 1948–65; 2) the struggle against racial segregation and discrimination, initiated and exemplified by the African-American civil-rights movement from 1955 to 1965; and 3) the struggle for multiculturalism and minority rights, which emerged in

In an approach analogous to the one developed by Bell, Alan Freeman fuelled the fledgling CRT movement by focusing his considerations on the logic and consequences of the legal system's neutral attitude for racial problems. He criticised not just their ineffectiveness, but also their side effects; he pointed out that African-Americans demanding more and better jobs, houses, schools, and more political power as a *real* way to overcome discrimination were prevented from doing so precisely by those Antidiscrimination Laws (Freeman, 1978). In a colour-blind legal system, any accusation of suffering discrimination required proof of a specific perpetrator causing at least one individual victim suffering and clearly motivated by racial reasons.[13]

Consequently, black communities were stripped of the chance to denounce systematic discrimination, produced by a diffuse perpetrator and operating in subtle ways. Even worse, any request for racial balance or proportionality would constitute a form of racism itself, an instance of so-called reverse discrimination. In a word, the legal system required that the members of the black communities conceptualise their identity and denounce the injustices suffered without denoting any racial consciousness; in the eyes of the law, African-Americans were expected to think and behave like *Americans*. In this sense, Peller asserts there was an implicit pact accepting that '…the price of the national commitment to suppress white supremacists would be the rejection of race consciousness among African Americans.' (1990:760)

To think that any racial consciousness immediately implies racism, which is the consequence of applying a neutral and colour-blind framework to the legal system, leads to an interchangeable perspective between perpetrator and victim. This sort of reverse discrimination, in which claiming racial balance transforms the objects of discrimination into racists and the beneficiaries of systematic advantages

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the late 1960s.' (Kymlicka, 2012b:5) -emphasis mine- It could be the phrasing, but to assume that it was the liberal ideology that generated the political movements to fight hierarchies is odd, to say the least. I believe that ideology is something that influences the world, the same way the world shape ideologies. I can concede that the liberal interpretation of the claims shaped the movements move towards the liberal political sphere, which is completely understandable. It is the core of the liberal theory: to assume that the disputes have to be solved in the political arena. But that is different to affirm that the grassroots fights for diversity and plurality, and in consequence their achievements, are the result of the liberal ideology.

[13] An analogous discussion, perhaps wider, is developed by Iris Marion Young in regards to oppression. 'The systemic character of oppression implies that an oppressed group need not have a correlate oppressing group. While structural oppression involves relations among groups, these relations do not always fit the paradigm of conscious and intentional oppression of one group by another.' (1990:41)

into victims, allows observable social phenomena like '…"angry white males" who, against all evidence, have positioned themselves as the chief "victims" of contemporary racial politics.' (Crenshaw et al., 1995:xxxii) Even in logical terms, the non-recognition of race leads to inconsistencies, like the one denounced by Neil Gotanda: 'Suppressing the recognition of a racial classification in order to act as if a person was not of some cognizable racial class is inherently racially premised.' (1991:19) Other problems related to the way Antidiscrimination Laws were shaped by the liberal principle of neutrality include the way they preclude real remediation of certain forms of inequality, the lack of a responsible figure for *factual conditions* associated with discrimination, and the burden they place on the victim.

> The fault idea is reflected in the assertion that only "intentional" discrimination violates the antidiscrimination principle. In its pure form, intentional discrimination is conduct accompanied by a purposeful desire to produce discriminatory results. (…) the causation requirement serves to distinguish from the totality of conditions that a victim perceives to be associated with discrimination those that the law will address. These dual requirements place on the victim the nearly impossible burden of isolating the particular conditions of discrimination produced by and mechanically linked to the behavior of an identified blameworthy perpetrator, regardless of whether other conditions of discrimination, caused by other perpetrators, would have to be remedied for the outcome of the case to make any difference at all. (Freeman, 1978:1055-1056)

In Bell's view, the legal system allows racial hierarchies because it is intended to protect white privilege and to procure white long-term interests. In Freeman's opinion, the legal system makes it virtually impossible to fight extended forms of discrimination by assuming itself difference-blind. Both set the ground for the development of CRT by exposing a more complex view of the relations between law and race. Their vindication of race-consciousness and their suspicion of colour-blindness tried to go beyond a reductionist and individualistic understanding of discrimination. In a certain way, they brought the complex dynamics of power relations to the discussion and analysis of race. The legal system, in their considerations, was both cause and effect of racial relations; laws shape and are shaped by power and racial relations. In consequence, the law maintains and reproduces indirect practices of racial domination. In this context, CRT appeared as an attempt to analyse discrimination, bigotry and inequality through the realist lens of racial power.

2.3 Differential racialisation and the *ad hoc* construction of categories

Audrey Lorde's words 'For Black women as well as Black men, it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others - for their use and to our detriment.' (1984c:45) condense in a few lines the most fundamental form of oppression: the one that is rooted in our identity.[14] Critical race theory is a remarkable means to show that, historically, several groups have been defined when deciding who should and who should not get access to some benefits. Delgado (2012:76) mentions that in the US, since 1790 and until 1952, naturalisation was only possible for white men, and for some periods of time and under some circumstances Jews, Irish and Italians were considered non-white. The fact that some terms cannot be 'objectively' delimited leads crits[15] to denounce the complex interests and prejudices embedded in constructing those categories. As a consequence, further explanations on the historical development of the concept of race derived in ideas such as *differential racialisation*, that is, the view '…that each disfavored group in this country has been racialized in its own individual way and according to the needs of the majority group at particular times in its history.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:69)

> Race descriptions, like Prospero's terms to Caliban, obtain their power not by verisimilitude, but by the extent to which they embody the epistemic violence of colonialism itself. In this respect the language of race, like all language, is centred in, and generated by, relations of power. (Ashcroft, 2001:312)

CRT shed light on the prejudices and power struggles behind the construction of important concepts like race, gender or ethnicity. However, the same analysis of power and interest is expanded to other related categories that might seem more likely to be neutral and objective. For instance, 'Building on the work of radical criminologists, one race crit shows that the disproportionate criminalization of African Americans is a product, in large part, of the way we define crime.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:113) CRT advocates conclude that 'Categories and subgroups, then, are not just matters of theoretical interest. How we frame them determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:55) Bill Ashcroft elaborates, through a socio-historical and linguistic analysis, on the idea that racial terms were not only used to describe the racial difference but

[14] Lorde's words are a collective instance of what I presented in the introduction using Pirandello's novel: the problem of others imposing on us an identity in which we are unable to recognise ourselves.

to denote an ideological distinction between chromatic terms like light and darkness, giving them further connotations, the distinction between them like good and evil, civilised and primitive. ‘Language has always ‘inscribed’ rather than ‘described’ human difference through such chromatic signifiers. Those signifiers have had an indispensable function in colonial relations and have been notoriously difficult to dislodge.’ (Ashcroft, 2001:314)

Taking inspiration from Ashcroft, we can question if the contemporary notion of culture, prominently linked to national identity, *described* the unity within modern communities or if it was a *prescriptive* idea loaded with ideological assumptions, which have clearly not been dislodged. However, it is interesting to imagine how the liberal context has influenced the particular notions of culture we debate nowadays. Consequently, considering the historical situation when the term culture was used to refer to groups pretty much in the sense it is understood nowadays, I risk a very brief interpretation of the *inscribed* ideas behind the *descriptive* part of the concept.

From Kant to Herder, from Wilhelm von Humbolt to Franz Boas, from Herbert Spencer to Edward Taylor, the concept of culture was constantly moving from the restrictive and normative idea of *Bildung* to the apparently more inclusive *Weltanschauung.* In the time these thinkers and philosophers are coining the modern idea of culture, they are themselves in the middle of nationalist movements, dealing with the tensions between the construction of a German nation and the decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There is also the contrast between a colonialist perception of western progress and the uncivilised state of nature in which non-European natives seem to live. The chromatic terms behind the category of culture are somewhat visible, but confusing. Opposite ideas conflate in the same word. It has never been clear how we can use the same term to refer to the most exceptional elite human expressions, like works of art, and also to the most pedestrian everyday behaviours and beliefs. It is not clear at all how we can refer to cultures as groups sharing a particular language, history and territory, differentiating one from the other, but at the same time speak of a mainstream culture that seems the same in every western nation. However, the emphasis of one definition over another denotes the interests behind their construction. Words do not exist in a vacuum; they have their own history and socio-political context.

In definitions of culture expressed in liberal conditions, the omissions connote something equally as important as the direct denotations. Kymlicka’s

[15] Critical Race Theory scholars

definition of culture represents well the liberal context I describe above. He says: '... I am using 'a culture' as synonymous with 'a nation' or 'a people'—that is, as an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history.' (1995:18) Here the emphasis on the national aspect and the exclusion of markers like religion shape our understanding of what a culture is and, respectively, of what a multi-cultural society should be in a liberal context. The liberal multicultural project omitted at the beginning categories of race and religion in its consideration of culture for the reason that it pretended to move from ethnic to civic citizenship. This is exactly the same idea I mention in Chapter 3 about the construction of civic nations and the origin of political plurality; it is also the reason why a culture is mostly a synonym for a nation or a people.

Unfortunately, the implications of this attempt are not always positive. Multiculturalists like Kymlicka have acknowledged that '…in retrospect, it seems clear that early theories of multiculturalism did not adequately address the specific challenges that religion raises. (…) This inattention to religion has been rightly criticised by many scholars.' (2015:42) Eventually, Taylor included religion in the equation and more recently Parekh has focused on race and religion. However, they had to swim against the tide. The prevalent notion is that a civic identity cannot include these features. Other important consequences of the way we understand *culture* in a liberal context include the fact that minorities such as African-Americans are not taken into account as a particular group. They do not fit in any group considered in the classification, they are neither a nation, an immigrant group nor indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, they are a cultural minority that has suffered from hierarchical relations, being largely excluded from the main culture *due to cultural reasons*.

There is no way to perfectly define anything. Every time we construct a definition, we are trying to say what it is, which is a way to *describe* its identity. However, we can perceive that within the descriptions there is a prescriptive component. There is a power element in trying to set up a definition as if it were the true one. Every time we chose to emphasise one aspect over others in a definition, we do so purposefully. The problem would not be so bad if the imperfection of the definitions ended there but, as I said, to define something is to prescribe an identity, and in the case of people, our identity is always the answer to the question who am I? To acknowledge that definitions are not neutral, objective and purely descriptive is

an important step to fight the constraints upon us and liberate our identity and our self.

2.4 Privilege, reformism and structural change

The different understandings of the role of institutions in advancing plurality and diversity is a good way to grasp the incompatibility of the liberal approach and CRT. Largely, the traditions each theory uses for building their arguments explain the dissimilarity. In general terms, liberal theories are often considered *modern*. CRT, as a radical critique of liberal theories, is usually labelled as *post-modern*. A reductionist scheme casting liberalism and CRT as a modern vs post-modern dispute would have difficulties explaining the theories' notional and aspirational overlaps. In fact, the lines are blurry or rather relative. For instance, Michael Dusche (2004) considers that an otherwise openly liberal approach such as Kymlicka's multiculturalism can be too radical and go against liberal-democratic pluralism if it insists in considering groups and not individuals as the yardstick of justice. At the same time, multiculturalists such as Parekh believe that those same forms of multiculturalism are too liberal.

If we assume the naiveté of trying to categorise what has no fixed margins, we can - for heuristic purposes - say that *modern* philosophers heavily influenced liberal theories of diversity and plurality. In consequence, they present a more *positive* side of concepts such as historical progress, certainty or meaning. On the other hand, CRT draws on Critical Legal Studies and Radical Feminism, on figures like Derrida, Gramsci, the American radical tradition of Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King Jr., as well as the Black Power and Chicano movements (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:4). Therefore, it positions itself closer to a more critical and destabilising perspective that emphasises concepts like difference and power relations. Even if liberal pluralism and CRT seem to coincide in the same socio-political tradition claiming equality after WWII in western countries, it is clear that their nature, tone and inspirational sources are dissimilar. At least in attitude and methods, the difference is the same as the between modern and post-modern standpoints, and on the practical level, between reformist attempts to implement institutional policies and grassroots anti-establishment activism. I analyse this practical difference in this section.

CRT develops a double approach to reflect the life-force behind its core

principles; on one hand, it advocates radical solutions or structural changes and, on the other hand, it builds concrete strategies to transform the situation of discrimination of particular groups in very specific contexts, always taking into account the particularities of each group and their intersectional circumstances. On that account, liberal proposals place themselves somewhere between these two extremes, exactly where it seems to be less effective; they neither push radical enough changes nor address a particular group's issues. Two critiques derive from this middle ground of the liberal institutional approach: first, positive polices prove themselves ineffective, producing as many harmful side-effects as benefits and, secondly, the slow-pace reformist approach prevents deeper change.

Liberal theories push wide-ranging policies that are not easily translated into the everyday life of individuals, or at least not easily applied outside a set of ideal conditions. In the case of multiculturalism, for instance, 'It could be argued that the top-down policy changes which have occurred within the last decade have had little impact upon the ways in which people negotiate these [multicultural] differences in everyday environments.' (Hardy, 2017:3) The weak impact of the policies in the everyday life of minority groups is also denounced by scholars outside the sphere of CRT such as Anne Phillips (2007), Steven Vertovec (2006) or Amanda Wise (2009). There is a visible gap in most liberal systems between the level of institutional policies and grassroots assimilation. However, in contrast with other approaches, CRT does not anticipate that bridging this gap will solve the problem. Neither does it disappear with a bottom-up perspective instead of a top-down approach. The real problem is that liberal attempts do not touch the root of diversity issues: privilege. This is the reason why policies do not positively affect the quotidian lives of minorities. Liberal policies and amendments are never deep enough to jeopardise the privilege of dominant groups.

CRT analyses some *negative* consequences arising from otherwise *positive* policies to make its point about the slow pace of reformist progress, especially in the case of affirmative action. Even if it is evident that affirmative action has had a positive impact on the social progress of a significant number of African-Americans, just as other liberal policies did, crits have pointed the finger at its limits. In its study, Derrick Bell does not deny the favourable impact of policies and civil rights on minorities, he simply asserts it is not enough, neither at the structural level of institutional oppression nor in the practical aspects of social progress. He says: 'Certainly there are more civil rights laws on the books than ever before; yet

paradoxically, by every available measure of objective social and economic conditions, the gaps between blacks and whites remain large.' (Derrick Bell, 1989:13-14)

The impact of policies and rights have been proved limited and, on top of the ineffectiveness, their side effects are not positive either. Amongst the side effects we can mention: 1) there is a tendency of individuals from minority groups to become guardians of the status quo once they are integrated into the mainstream culture, 2) measures like affirmative action has been of far more help to white privileged people than to oppressed minorities, 3) the passivity following policies and laws being set in motion. This last effect is particularly important. For instance, '…judicial approval of affirmative action in its earlier years, as ambivalent as it was, has caused advocates of the policy to relax. It also caused us to believe that our victories in court would translate automatically into acceptance in the community.' (Derrick Bell, 2000:149)

According to Bell, affirmative action is able to bring equality to *some*, but it never challenges the fundamental assumptions of privilege. Therefore, the reformist measures to fight discrimination and inequality have just a sort of palliative effect. There is no way to secure real equality in American society if it is not through the acknowledgement and renunciation of historically established white privilege, which is not just white, but white, male and bourgeois (Young, 1990). Moreover, if we expand Bell's argument beyond the case of affirmative action, we can affirm that minorities' integration does not entail equality. All the more, any true attempt to push equality implies a claim for a loss of privilege for members of the mainstream culture.

The second problem with the middle ground of the liberal policies and laws is their inherent reformism bias. According to crits, this perspective prevents important changes from happening. Institutional instruments such as anti-discrimination laws, but also group-differentiated rights are instances of slow-paced reformist *progress* that prevent deeper changes. They work through a proceduralism that corresponds to a '…somewhat optimistic view of liberal anti-discrimination as already providing an adequate basis for challenging racism, sexism, disablism and so on.' (A. Phillips, 2017:7) The reformist stand assumes that the foundation suffices for subsequent changes and the system is perfectible. CRT questions this assumption.

> CRT takes liberalism to task for its cautious, incremental quality. When we are tackling a structure as deeply embedded as race, radical measures are required. "Everything must change at once," otherwise the system merely swallows up the small improvement one has made, and everything remains the same. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:57)

Even if liberal institutions progress in addressing *direct* hierarchical relations, they are unable to resolve some fundamental issues at the base of western democratic societies. It is true that some political philosophers have looked for alternative perspectives beyond the classical liberal values but the approaches still remain reformist.[16] Reformist approaches are based on a fear of radical change and its consequences, that is, the perception that we should not push radical changes if we think it would create a backlash and ultimately worsen the situation. Not asking too much seems a slower but safer path than radical change. The idea of a sure path constrains the speed of change, not too slow because minorities could become impatient and riot, but not too fast because elites and majorities could feel their benefits are jeopardised.

It can be argued that the reformist approach has its own advantages and that it is a secure path. In the aftermath, asking too much would negatively affect the actual –if insufficient - protections for minority groups.[17] This pragmatic perspective would explain the gradualism pursued in social and political changes, but it will also limit the aims of social movements. In Chapter 7, I explain that in the case of Québécois interculturalism, the aim of reciprocity is supported by the claim of majority anxieties, and this is mainly a fear of losing privileges. This also legitimates an *ad hoc* precedence and control interventionism of the host Francophone society. Incorporating CRT criticism, we can analyse arguments like the following:

> The principles behind ad hoc precedence can soothe majority anxieties that could easily turn into hostility –especially when there are social or political actors who readily stand to profit. (…) To conclude this point, it would be an error to believe that all majority cultures are basically menacing or harmful. Some have a remarkable history of openness and generosity towards minorities, while others, despite difficult circumstances, have managed to maintain their liberal leanings. Often dominant cultures are helpful agents in advancing democracy and individual rights. (Bouchard, 2011:455-56)

According to Bouchard, the aim of keeping the majority culture's privilege is openly acknowledged and supported, including also a warning to not poke the bear. Anyhow, a utilitarian calculation of what is likely to happen should not be enough to

[16] For instance, Bhikhu Parekh develops a theory of plurality and diversity outside the liberal constraints, but his approach is reformist and centred on political institutions. He believes that positive inclusive changes can be pushed through political institutions.

[17] Moderated approaches of CRT have more "acceptance" than the radical ones, which demonstrate that western societies are configured in a way that reformism is more suitable than radical change. 'The narrative turn and storytelling scholarship seem well on their way toward acceptance, as does the critique of merit. More radical features, such as recognition that the status quo is inherently racist, rather than merely sporadically and accidentally so, seem less likely to win out.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:135)

prevent us from pushing the changes we believe in, and even less to prevent us from criticising the values and institutions that inhibit those changes. This is also a valuable CRT contribution to the debates of diversity, plurality and equality. We should not stop in the middle range claims and push for a radical change; we should also to move away from the grey area in which saying we are neutral or impartial just add to the oppression of those claiming justice, recognition and dignity. As Alan Freeman says (1978), the reformist assumes the perspective of the perpetrator, the radical the perspective of the victim. Let us be on the side of the victims.

2.5 Systematic power and oppression

The debate about the ways power is behind otherwise objective definitions and eventually institutions is based on two different understandings of power. CRT considers that *power is not strictly a thing* but it is primarily a configuration of relations that bias the behaviour of some individuals toward others. Liberal approaches to power are more traditional; they usually refer to direct relationships between two parts, and they are constrained to instances of intentional agency.[18] Therefore, it is understandable that liberal perspectives struggle to perceive systematic racism beyond direct bigotry and discrimination. Nevertheless, persistent micro-aggressions, low-grade prejudices, unconscious acceptance of a state of affairs or unfavourable affirmation of a status quo also evidence a lack of recognition.

From the liberal perspective, there is no reason to suspect institutions and their policies are oppressive, but if they were, those policies or institutions must be supplanted. This is exactly the nature of the reformist processes of liberalisation.[19] After all, we become increasingly liberal societies by liberalising our institutions. Therefore, following this train of thought, in no case can a liberal institution be oppressive. Completely the opposite, when we say that institutions are *liberal,* it is because in every case they *liberate*. If we found an institution sustaining any form of oppression, it is not liberal, and it has to be liberalised.

Liberal institutions democratically persuade the members of society in a way

[18] Even if scholars such as Steven Lukes (2005) have made an important effort to endorse a more radical view of power and show conflict is not essential to it, it is still a *direct* relation between two parts and focused on the dynamics between embodied interests.

[19] 'But it is worth remembering that all existing liberal nations had illiberal pasts, and their liberalization required a prolonged process of institutional reform.' (Kymlicka, 1995:94)

that promotes –not restricts- their agency. Other institutions, particularly from cultural and/or religious minorities, can be accused of oppression exactly because of their illiberality. Those institutions are illiberal if they restrict their members' freedom and impose a fixed identity on them. Liberal institutions impose nothing on their members, they democratically persuade them. Illiberal institutions force, liberal ones persuade (Kymlicka, 2015:238), as I discuss in Chapter 5. From the liberal perspective, a power relation is direct, delivered by clear means, and indicated by violence, intimidation or fear. Institutions cannot be the source of oppression because they are the means to address it. 'In dominant political discourse, it is not legitimate to use the term oppression to describe our society, because oppression is the evil perpetrated by the Others.' (Young, 1990:41)

CRT is closer to post-modern ideas such as Foucault's or Agamben's notion of power. Power is not a property of groups or individuals, something they could have; power does not exist until the moment a power relation is enacted. In contrast to the violence that acts directly on bodies and things, this more surreptitious power does not act directly, but on possible actions. Power leads to the possibility of conducting and putting in order a possible outcome.

> [Power] is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions. (Foucault, 1982:789)

Foucault also mentions that power is exercised through net-like organisations; it flows and functions like a chain (1980). Power relations are part of something more general; they are part of the social nexus. Power cannot be reduced to conscious and intentional oppression, actually, it is often internalised by the individuals avoiding the need of a visible oppressor as in the metaphor of the panopticon. (Foucault, 1979) And more importantly, liberal institutions exercise power by their practices of education, medicine, bureaucracy and so on, and not only through law and order institutions. As a result, we maintain and reproduce oppression *through* institutions, without the need of being conscious agents. In other words, all liberal institutions are at some extent disciplinary institutions, setting a complex structure of systematic oppression.

It is fair to mention that liberal scholars like Judith Shklar have pointed out that the exact purpose of liberalism is to prevent the abuse of public powers in all the regimes and, therefore, to protect the weak from the powerful (1989:28).

Acknowledging that fear is the most common form of social control, Skhlar's *Liberalism of Fear* advocates limited government and control of political power as the minimal condition for securing freedom in liberal societies. A minimum 'amount' of fear and coercion is necessary and *allowed* to the government in order to fulfil its essential functions: securing the political conditions necessary for the exercise of personal freedom. 'A minimal level of fear is implied in any system of law, and the liberalism of fear does not dream of an end of public, coercive government.' (Shklar, 1989:29) Therefore, there are legitimate agents of minimal liberal coercion, which have the mission of preventing greater cruelty. All things considered, liberals could argue that a minimum amount of fear and coercion is the price we pay for the benefits of living in democratic, egalitarian, western democracies.

Nevertheless, there is a foundational problem in this kind of narrative regarding the origins and minimal conditions for constructing modern societies. Returning over and over again to theories of the social contract seems inevitable. What is important for my purposes is to highlight the minimum coercion necessary to make the state work is different than a systematic form of oppression. It is somewhat plausible to accept that some amount of coercion over everyone is needed in order to ensure that agreements will be kept, that a small fear of punishment might help to keep a minimum order within a society. However, that is very different from liberal institutions inflicting systematic oppression over particular groups.

As happens with some other more benign forms of liberalism, the liberalism of fear has positive aims and develops a theory promising to address fundamental issues like inequality or bigotry, even racism.

> …as do its accounts of the prevalence of racism, xenophobia, and systematic governmental brutality here and everywhere. I cannot see how any political theorist or politically alert citizen can possibly ignore them and fail to protest against them. Once we do that, we have moved toward the liberalism of fear, and away from the more exhilarating but less urgent forms of liberal thought. (Shklar, 1989:38)

Nevertheless, it works on a different level than more systematic critiques such as CRT. It deals with direct racism, xenophobia and particularly with open governmental brutality, like some forms of tyranny, but it does not acknowledge other systematic, subtle, ways of oppression, forms that keep racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination as up-to-date despite the liberalism of the institutions.

CRT denounces another misconception that we can identify at the core of liberalism, this fallacy helps us to understand why liberal approaches ignore the

systematic element in power relations. The *empathic fallacy* refers to '...the belief that one can change a narrative by merely offering another, better one—that the reader's or listener's empathy will quickly and reliably take over.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:28) No minority has achieved equality so far by a change of narrative. The empathic fallacy led us to believe that discrimination would be eradicated once the oppressor is persuaded of the misconception of their ideological background. And even if this is not a fallacy directly assumed by liberal theories of diversity and plurality –because they do not deal with narratives, but with policies and rights-, it is present in the sense it assumes the abolishment of discrimination and inequality must be reached by a shift towards the liberal ideology of human rights and civic citizenship.

It is a pending task for political scientists, especially for the liberal ones, to explain why in societies that have incrementally embraced liberal and democratic rights and policies, there have been socio-political phenomena such as Brexit or the rise of the far-right parties driven, at least partially, by bigotry and xenophobia. The disenchantment produced by these recent instances has unveiled the consequences of the empathic fallacy assumed by the liberal theories fighting discrimination; a fallacy that perhaps has its roots in the Enlightenment and its blind trust in reason and moral progress.

The same problems: racism, discrimination, bigotry or oppression in general. Two different ways to understand power: the liberal and the post-modern. Two -apparently- opposite assessments of liberal institutions: from one perspective, they help to address direct inequality and oppression, from the other perspective, they reproduce and maintain the oppression of particular groups in more subtle but extensive ways. One important problem remains open for further debate: whether we believe the liberal institutions can legitimately serve the purposes of minorities after the proper adjustments, as liberals say, or we think institutions, as happened before, will keep supporting the interests of specific groups. And no easy answers.

2.6 Coming back to reforms: the de-radicalisation of CRT

After the initial push by Bell and Freeman, the stances, developments and arguments grown by different flanks of the movement established a diversity of topics and takes. In the CRT *corpus,* there are pieces referring to the American legal system's role in upholding white privilege, but also studies discussing class issues

(D. Cole, 1999), education (Brown, 1993), housing (L. Cole & Foster, 2001), employment (Harris, 1993), gender roles and sexual orientation (Hutchinson, 1997), affirmative action (Kennedy, 1990), intersectional studies on the oppression of black women (Crenshaw, 1991), etc. Amongst the scholars that stood out after the foundational moment of the movement, we can mention Richard Delgado, Kimberly Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, Charles R. Lawrence and Mari Matsuda. They have maintained the movement by insisting on racial consciousness. Even if there has never been a unified program to fight racial inequality, crits have proved that a constellation of different issues can be questioned under the light of CRT's fundamental notions of racial realism, racial consciousness and integrationist convergence as keys to understand and fight the black community's oppression. In a certain way, they became the glue for the movement besides the activism.[20]

> …there is no canonical set of doctrines or methodologies to which we all [crits] subscribe. Although Critical Race scholarship differs in object, argument, accent, and emphasis, it is nevertheless unified by two common interest. The first is to understand how a regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America, and, in particular, to examine the relationship between that social structure and professed ideals such as "the rule of law" and "equal protection." The second is a desire not merely to understand the vexed bond between law and racial power but to change it. (Crenshaw et al., 1995:xiii)

The diversity of takes and perspectives within the CRT movement gradually gave rise to another sort of issue, particularly the development of an *idealist* angle in a movement that consciously embraced *racial realism* as its foundational stance. The possible explanations for this phenomenon might include the *natural* development of a theory that progressively adjusts and corrects its points of view and methods to reflect the changing times (Crenshaw et al., 1995:xxx-xxxii), it could be also the product of various disciplines superficially adopting CRT criticism without embracing its core assumptions (Curry, 2011:3), or a younger and less radical generation of scholars with a different background and context, heavily influenced by European philosophers and their emphasis on categories like thought and discourse (Delgado, 2001:2284).

We can distinguish two main positions: a materialist standpoint that assumes racism has structural components to safeguard privileges and status, and an idealist perspective that believes racism and discrimination are the results of categories, words, attitudes, emotions and discourses. As mentioned before, Bell and Freeman

[20] 'Although critical race theory is not cohesive, it is at least committed.' (Derrick Bell, 1995:900)

are the most important realist scholars; the idealist side is represented by Charles R. Lawrence III in his influential *The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism* (1987). The idealist perspective emphasises that race is a socially constructed reality, while the materialist one focuses on power relations and the structural means of power.

Subsequently, there are two kinds of proposals. On one side, idealists believe that strategies, such as getting rid of hate speech, deconstructing stereotypes and increasing the fair representation of minorities in the media are the way to fight racism; in one word, they support approaches building favourable *attitudes* towards other communities and their members. Materialists believe that changing the economic, political and social circumstances of minorities is the way to fight racial and ethnic inequality. The materialist side is concerned with issues like globalisation, human rights, immigration, poverty and justice. In these problems related to material conditions, crits perceive the real conditions that afflict minorities. Idealist CRT focuses on '…categories by which our society constructs and understands race and racism. Writers in this camp are apt to emphasize issues, such as identity and intersectionality, that have to do with words and categories.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:120)

At the core of the CRT theses, racial consciousness and racial realism have made room for the idealist standpoint and its emphasis on the constructionist character of the concept of race. Richard Delgado has reinterpreted the aims of CRT to include the idealist perspective in the movement's core beliefs (2012:7). He affirms there are three main ideas that CRT assume as the base of its development: 1) racism is ordinary and not aberrant, that is, it is part of the common and everyday experience of most of the people of colour; 2) the system of white-over-colour serves psychic and material purposes; 3) races are the product of social thought, therefore, they are social constructions that have changed according to the *convenience* of some groups and depending on the situations like the labour market. The third thesis, in particular, reflects the idealist perspective within the movement, even if it is surreptitiously complemented by a materialist twist.

Idealist CRT became an important tool to express and denounce the different stories and experiences of oppression suffered by the black community in the US; meanwhile, the materialist side denounces the way the social construction of a category like race has served specific power structures. Idealist CRT provides a conceptual framework to help minorities make *their voice heard* outside the

framework that serves oppression but could be also a source of inspiration for more focused and direct political action based on the materialist side of the movement. In this sense, there is no contradiction, only tension between them. 'This division in CRT created a tension in the study of law and the socio-political contexts that give rise to it.' (Curry, 2011:3)

At first glance, there is no clear reason why the idealist and the materialist views cannot complement each other and produce better and stronger arguments. They are glued together by the same aim and both constitute part of the same theoretical effort. However, there could be an important issue with the idealist perspective if, as some scholars like Delgado or Curry have pointed out, it represents emancipation of the movement and an instance of the academic dispositions and behaviours that the early scholars attempted to criticise (Delgado, 1984).

Finally, I describe important criticisms directed to CRT and some flaws that I think we should discuss further. Criticism includes the narrow space for no African-American minority groups within the white-black paradigm, the limited utility of storytelling for deeper change, the distortion of public discourse it portrays, the lack of respect for concepts like truth and merit, atypical use of histories denouncing systematic discrimination, and lack of analytical rigour. The criticism comes from different sources and responds to different interests, additionally, some critiques are more accurate than others.[21] In consequence, I briefly describe some of those critiques that have better reasons to stand, as well as those that might contravene some points I made myself during the argumentation of this chapter.

Idealist CRT believes that, as far as race is not a 'real' or 'objective' category but constructed, a deconstruction is always possible. Consequently, 'Attacking embedded preconceptions that marginalize others or conceal their humanity is a

[21] Daniel Farber and Suzanna Sherry call CRT a radical form of multiculturalism, that is, a political perspective opposite to the liberal principles, '…a broad-based attack on the Enlightenment foundations of democracy.' (Farber & Sherry, 1997:5) More specifically, CRT as a form of radical multiculturalism leads to a perspective that advocates '…collective rights (i.e. "human rights" for groups) on the same or even on a more fundamental level as individual human rights.' (Dusche, 2004:243). In order to invalidate CRT, Farber and Sherry point out that Jewish and Asian people are more successful in the mainstream society than other groups, implying that western democratic institutions are not biased against minorities in general. The success or failure of African Americans depend on them. This sort of criticism corresponds to evaluations from the classical liberal perspective, and even if they have some merit, they miss the point completely. The (backgrounded) assimilationist assumption makes it a target of criticism even within liberal circles. 'In the conformist ideal, status quo institutions and norms are assumed as given, and disadvantaged groups who differ from those norms are expected to conform to them.' (Young, 1990:165)

legitimate function of all fiction.' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:42) Nevertheless, this approach seems to ignore there is a difference between identifying or denouncing a power relation and *fighting it,* even worse if the power relation is systematic and deeply embedded. Something constructed can be theoretically and linguistically deconstructed, but the deconstruction does not directly change the role of categories in the world. Idealist CRT help to unveil the dominant features hidden in narratives and concepts. In that sense, it builds some resistance, but there is something missing to foment the next step of challenging the current state of affairs.

The power of deconstruction as a tool of criticism is well known and recognised, but its substantial impact is still debated. Ashcroft (2001) explains this faith in the racial and cultural emancipatory power of language as a false belief, inherited from the 19th-century philology, that affirms language actually embodies cultural difference instead of just expressing it. In consequence, it was assumed that by developing their own narratives and embracing their own traditions, that is, expressing themselves in their own voice, their cultural difference would be automatically placed on equal terms as a counterpart of the dominant narratives. In order to bring their cultural uniqueness to the table, members of a community would just need to find their voice. Unfortunately, it is not clear how categories can overcome material conditions. Conversely, it seems that the material conditions tend to restrict the liberating narratives to the same oppressive structures they denounce.

> We black people tried to write ourselves out of slavery, a slavery even more profound than mere physical bondage. Accepting the challenge of the great white Western tradition, black writers wrote as if their lives depended upon it-and, in a curious sense, their lives did, the "life of the race" in Western discourse. But if blacks accepted this challenge, we also accepted its premises, premises which perhaps concealed a trap. (Gates, 1985:12-13)

CRT storytelling cannot trust that, through empathic descriptions of the obstacles and disadvantages that people from minority groups have to face, members of the dominant group could change not only their attitude but the systematic conditions of oppression. In that regard, it is guilty of falling into the very same empathic fallacy that it denounces in liberal thinking.

> As such, deconstruction has been used as the "wonder drug" by White authors to claim that they now think differently about their Whiteness and want to use their enlightenment for the betterment of the Black race, and by Black thinkers to claim that simply not thinking about race or transcending its social construct altogether will eliminate racism. (Curry, 2011:8)

It is a fact that the integration paradigm force minorities to talk in a voice that is not necessarily theirs. Giving voice is a step forward, but there is a long distance

to walk for giving power to the marginalised. Something interesting about CRT as a socio-political project is that, despite pressing for radical social changes, some of its more logically and empirically supported proposals are not radical enough. If racism is systematic and it is deeply embedded in modern societies, storytelling and discourse analysis seem to fall short of what we expect for a structural change. At least they must be complemented with structural proposals.

2.7 Conclusions

If the function of CRT is to provide a critique of social institutions, then an interesting problem arises when it is incorporated by those institutions it once criticised. Particularly idealist CRT approaches, '…like legal storytelling and narrative jurisprudence, have turned into what sociologists of knowledge call normal science.' (Delgado, 2011:1257) The first consequence of this *normalisation* is that it becomes, at least in the eyes of its militant supporters, more liberal than radical. In any case, the incorporation would not be a problem if, like it is supposed to happen in science, a paradigm shift precedes that incorporation. But in contrast to what happens in scientific change, CRT' criticism has been absorbed without the legal system being organised around a new paradigm. The values and principles of liberal, modern, western societies still stand. Even if CRT makes strong points against the liberal structure of western societies, liberal institutions were gradually able to incorporate at least the most notable strategies from the idealist perspective. Anyway, the normalisation of CRT does not mean that it is serving opposite purposes, it just means that it could be perceived as less radical. The normalisation can be reversed if the materialist perspective reaffirms its more radical and systematic agenda.

CRT challenges the achievements of liberal theories. Using a more radical notion of power relations, it explains the dynamics of small and medium-range achievements of minority groups and the standing structural forms of oppression. CRT develops a theory to analyse the problem of coincidence between reformist progress and elitist dominant interests. It also examines how legal and political measures, like affirmative action, have not been so helpful for minority groups, despite the positive impact they bring to some individuals. Therefore, liberal efforts to foster diversity and plurality have achieved some undeniable advances in relation to outdated and archaic hierarchical relationships, but its gradual improvement of

major issues does not allow structural changes, nor solve particular problems of specific communities. It is a pending task to think further what are the conditions of radical change and the always sensitive question if we should do it by violent means. Perhaps we should start acknowledging that, as Benjamin suggest,

> …every conceivable solution to human problems, not to speak of deliverance from the confines of all the world-historical conditions of existence obtaining hitherto, remains impossible if violence is totally excluded in principle, the question necessarily arises as to other kinds of violence than all those envisaged by legal theory. It is at the same time the question of the truth of the basic dogma common to both theories [natural law and positive law]: just ends can be attained by justified means, justified means used for just ends. How would it be, therefore, if all the violence imposed by fate, using justified means, were of itself in irreconcilable conflict with just ends, (Benjamin, 2007:293)

Unfortunately, this path leads to another sort of problems and reflections. In this text, the next step is to begin with the nationalist roots of contemporary debates on diversity.

Chapter 3

Nationalism and the origin of political plurality

I imagine how the reader will face what is coming next. If I were facing the text for the first time, I would perceive something bizarre. There is something odd in a text claiming to focus on diversity and plurality that, nonetheless, devotes a whole chapter to theories of nationalism. We usually do not couple nationalism and diversity, or at least we do not tend to associate nationalism with the visible and positive sides of diversity: open-mindedness, tolerance of difference, respect for the other, etc. These are not features jumping out when we think about nationalists, at least not those we watch every day on the news. Additionally, the most important historical event of the twentieth century gave nationalism a bad name. Then, the reader might cleverly think this is a sort of rhetorical approach in which I will support diversity after diminishing nationalism, a strategy that would make the chapter somewhat superfluous. But I can assure her this is not the case, on the contrary, the text starts in this way because, despite our initial impression, diversity and nationalism are tightly interconnected.

How is civic nationalism related to plurality and diversity? And more importantly, why would an analysis of the main theories on nationalism help us to understand the liberal approaches on diversity and plurality? The short answer to the first question is that one of its forms, civic nationalism, set the basis for contemporary political plurality. A more cynical answer for the second question is that we have to scrutinise civic nationalism because western democracies have not advanced much in dealing with diversity since the consolidation of nation-states. In fact, we are still stuck with the same problems, the same categories and proposing a revised version of the same notions underlying the first debates on nationalism.

Our historical understanding of plurality and diversity within the liberal framework is still being shaped by notions inherited from debates on nationalism: social cohesion, democracy, liberal rights, neutral institutions, policies, national

identity, citizenship, etc. In the opinion of liberal scholars, at the core, the problem of diversity and plurality were solved long ago. We just need to periodically update it, taking into account the new circumstances faced by contemporary societies, but the base is firm: civic, liberal, institutionally strong societies. Actually, as I explain next, historically, western countries have moved from ethnic forms of organising life to civic ones exactly because it was assumed this would provide the room for diversity and plurality. However, the opposite is also possible: we have not moved forward facing diversity issues because of the constraints held by the notion that *any* positive approach on diversity requires the basis of political liberalism.

Before moving to the arguments and ideas, let me provide a recent illustration of what I have said. Last year, during Francis Fukuyama's presentation for *The Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*, he answered a question on the possibility of inculcating a sense of multiple fluid identities saying:

> Obviously, that's a reality, and it's something to be promoted and so forth, but you've got to think about politics because politics is about collective action. Collective action, for better or worse, in a democratic society takes place at a national and then all of the different subpolitical levels underneath that. Unless people in a sense have a clear sense of belonging to this broader democratic community where they share certain beliefs in the legitimacy of certain very specific kinds of political institutions, those institutions aren't going to work very well. (…) if you don't think, Yes, but I'm also an American who believes in the Constitution and in separation of powers and the importance of an independent judiciary, and you don't have that pretty firmly in your mind, you're not going to be able to organize to resist people who want to undermine that. (…) You have to talk about national identity and what you as a citizen hold in common with fellow citizens. (2018b)[22]

In this case, it does not matter if Fukuyama is a right-wing or left-wing oriented theorist. Both sides of the liberal spectrum have the same confidence in democracy, civic citizenship and political institutions as the way to solve the problems of identity recognition. That is exactly what makes them liberal in the first place. However, I do not share the same optimism. The whole aim of the text, not just this chapter, is to transcend the suffocating constraints of a liberal dominant narrative and its tendency to reduce everything to the realm of the political. There is room for diversity outside the wall of liberalism and its politics.

The idea of building a community on the basis of shared political identity was developed during the rise of modern nations and is an attribute of civic nationalism. The other form, ethnic nationalism, was assumed to arise from a combination of aspects including language, ethnicity, culture, race and religion. The analysis of the

[22] A formal development of this idea can be found in (Fukuyama, 2018a)

theories of nationalism sheds light on the cleavage between political and other forms of identity and recognition. I intend to unveil that the different ways of understanding identity are anchored in a set of theoretical assumptions about *how* members of a group can achieve social cohesion and *why* they should, which also clearly conditions the forms of recognition. The link between who the people are and how they are going to organise themselves to rule on democratic terms denotes the tight connection between civic nationalism and liberal democracy. Concepts like collective identity and social unity, so important for liberal theories of diversity and plurality, have been forged in the discussions on nationalism.

The chapter is divided into four sections before its Conclusion. It goes from the origins of nationalism, the two models that have dominated the debates, to the dialectics of identity and recognition supported by civic nationalism. In the first two sections, I briefly describe the origin, context, features and typology of nationalism, as well as how the idea of national identity has been used to secure social cohesion. After this, I will be able to characterise civic nationalism as constructed, political, liberal, democratic, voluntaristic and individualistic. In the last two sections, I argue that the emphasis on the construction of communities based on a set of liberal values -freedom, equality, democracy, etc.- and not based on some of their particular features denotes the effort to provide political identity to any individual despite their ethnicity, race, religion or culture. In this respect, political recognition opens the door for accommodating plurality and diversity within the same nation or state. In exchange, citizens are expected to develop allegiance to the political institutions, so securing a form of social solidarity towards fellow citizens, even when they might have opposed interests on particular issues. In other words, there is a recognition-allegiance dialectic within civic nations that conditions the political-social dynamics. At the end of the chapter, we will be able to perceive that in civic nations political recognition is addressed by institutions, through legal means and encapsulated in political rights and policies, and then we can start question ourselves if this is what we want when we demand our identity to be recognised.

3.1 Ethnic and civic nationalism: the origins of nations

The aim of my description is to unveil some assumptions in the concepts of nations and national identities. To reach this point I have to delineate first the way they actually appeared and the conditions that made them possible in the first place.

Nationalism is a term that can be understood in different ways. To reduce the chance of any confusion, by using the word I am referring to one particular idea: '…the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity.' (Miscevic, 2014) However, as Anthony Smith affirms, for analytical purposes we have '…to distinguish the ideological movement of national*ism* from the wider phenomenon of *national identity*.' (1991:vii) I try to draw a line between two kinds of nationalism and, consequently, I characterise two different ways to understand national identity. Therefore, the description takes the form of a constant contrast between the two kinds of nationalism.

The major division in the types of nationalism is between primordialist and modernist, or ethnic and civic as they are also known. In between these two dominant paradigms, scholars might identify other types invoked in the wide spectrum of nationalist studies: perennialism, postmodernism, ethno-symbolism, constructionism and instrumentalism (Smith, 1998) just to mention a few. The typology of nationalism is more complex than just two antithetical poles; different models of nationalism often overlap, they do not necessarily exclude each other and scholars tend to conflate them depending on what they want to emphasise or deny.[23] For my purposes, I focus on contrasting the ethnic and civic forms while acknowledging factual nationalism is more complex and diverse than the analytical distinctions I present here. The nuances that drive the extended typology of nationalism reflect the efforts to understand the origins of and classify particular nations. Civic and ethnic approaches can be usefully located with reference to theories of the rise of nations and nationalism.

Modernists, represented by Ernest Gellner, argue for an instrumentalist account, in which nationalism emerges in the modern era and becomes a secular glue holding society together. Primordialists, following the influential work of Anthony Smith, affirm that modern nationalism is rooted in a much older set of myths, symbols and cultural practices.[24] The strength of the civic theory is that it explains the relationship between nationalism and political modernisation; its weakness is that it struggles to explain the cultural features of nationalism, particularly the strong emotional appeal that cultural and ethnic aspects can generate amongst members

[23] Throughout the chapter I refer mostly to the descriptions of two competing theories of what nations are really made up of, and not exactly two types of nations that really exist. As I said, in reality, these analytical categories frequently overlap.

[24] A more detailed account of modernist forms of nationalism can be found in Anthony Smith's book *Nationalism and Modernism,* (1998) On the other hand, John Coackley (2018) provides a detailed picture of ethnic nationalism, including Smith's work.

of some communities. The strength of primordialist accounts is in describing the cultural weight of a nation's history; its weakness is an inability to explain the change from pre-national to national communities.

According to the civic account of nationalism, perhaps the most important feature of modern societies is political centralisation. Consequently, nationalism reflects this feature; "…nationalism is primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." (Gellner, 1983:1). On the other side, scholars supporting the ethnic view of nationalism, like Smith, would say that '…we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or form of politics but must treat them as cultural phenomena as well.' (1991:vii) Consequently, we can centre the debate in understanding whether national identity is a political or a cultural phenomenon, or both.

Traditionally, the legal and political community is expressed in the concept of citizenship, that is, civil, legal, political and socio-economic rights. 'Those who are associated in it are collectively called "a people", and are separately called "citizens" (as sharing in the sovereign power) and "subjects" (as being under the state's laws).' (Rousseau, 1950:I.6) The civic idea of a nation emphasises the common political culture and civic ideology, that is, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideals that bind the population together. To keep using Rousseau's terms, it emphasises the need for a *common* good or *common* interest that must be done by the general will and without which no society could exist. The common interest and the general will that tie people together form a sort of public civic culture. On the other side, the political community presupposes some common values and traditions that need to be expressed and symbolised. Consequently, in this model, the territory is proposed as the repository of historic memories. The idea of civic nation coincides with a community of laws and institutions with a single political will, in a determined territory. 'Historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology; these are the components of the standard, Western model of the nation.' (Smith, 1991:11)

The ethnic conception of the nation emphasises a community of birth and native culture. In this model, the belonging of an individual cannot be chosen. Even in the case of migration, people would remain members of their community of birth. A nation is a community of common descent. Solidarity has different sources: in the civic model, this corresponds to the set of common political sentiments and ideas binding the population together, whereas in the ethnic model it is historical

memories, myths, symbols and traditions that bind them together. In the ethnic version of nationalism, we can find negative features that have been largely criticised. For instance, it contributes to the constant danger of attempting to link the current people to great and noble ancestors in the remote past, which might easily become the door to open discrimination and xenophobia. Acknowledging the past is a serious and delicate matter, and the construction of national myths is never easy.

Even if scholars like Coakley (2018) think that this *primordialism* emphasising the links to a remote ancestry is a component of nationalist ideology, rather than an explanation of nationalism, it is almost undeniable that the spread of shared history and national myths facilitates the emergence of a sense of community and identity. On the other side, this way of linking the current generation with its ancestors outside the restrictions of a given territory has been very useful to study social phenomenon like migration. Approaches such as transnationalism, which '…accents the attachments migrants maintain to families, communities, traditions and causes outside the boundaries of the nation-state to which they have moved.'(Vertovec, 2001b:574), are close to this attempt to place identity in something beyond the limits of a given territory and a core of political beliefs. 'Genealogy, demography, traditional culture, and history furnish the main resources for an ethnic view of the formation of nations. It is a conception of the nation that has found favour mainly outside the West, and often opposes civic conceptions.' (Smith, 1988:9)

Another important disagreement between these two perspectives on nationalism is the issue of the priority of nations over nationalism or vice-versa. Gellner thinks that nationalism is prior to nations, that is, nationalism is the process that creates nations. Nations are inventions to suit historically specific economic and political needs: '…nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist.' (1964:168) On the other hand, Smith argues that nations are prior to nationalism, in other words, nations evolve from particular ethnic communities or *ethnies.*[25] 'It is, of course, possible to find historical examples where a strong case for some measure of continuity between pre-existing ethnic communities (ethnies) and modern nations can be made.' (1998:175)

The problem of the origin of nations is important because it heavily influences the understandings of national identity, and it is both theoretical and

[25] *Ethnie* refers to the population with common ancestry myths and shared historical memories, culture, a link with historic territory and some kind of solidarity.

historical. Political philosophers try to explain *why* the members of a nation might band together in the first place, and under what *principles*, which is a more theoretical approach. They look for the conditions without which nations and nationalism could not exist. This corresponds to an emphasis on the ideological element of nationalism. For instance, they tend to describe the modernity of nations but emphasise the theoretical and ideological core of modernity. In consequence, nations are some sort of embodiment of the Enlightenment principles of equality, freedom, and autonomy that bring together members of a community and shape a particular idea of collective identity that is both modern and liberal, and to a great extent rational. 'Kedourie had argued that nationalism was a doctrine invented in Europe in the early nineteenth century and that it sprang from the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment, notably from Kant's doctrine that the good will can only be the autonomous will.[26]' (Smith, 1998:99)

Other nationalism scholars are interested in describing *what* the particular social, economic and political conditions were in the different occurrences of nations, which is the historical complement of the theoretical account. They might also refer to the modernity of nations but emphasise the fast-growing industrialisation of European countries, the specialised economy and education, territorial reshaping, elite power struggles, or development of earlier ethnic ties and memories.

> The argument is in effect this: as the wave of industrialisation and modernisation moves outward, it disrupts the previous political units. (…) It disrupts them both directly and by undermining the faiths and practices which sustained them. This by itself would already lead to the formation of new political units. But, more specifically, the wave creates acute cleavages of interest between sets of people hit by it at differing times- (…) If, however, the differentiating marks are available -whether through distance, 'race', or cultural traits such as religion, they provide a strong incentive and a means for the backward region or population to start conceiving of itself as a separate 'nation' and to seek independence. Its intellectuals (i.e. the small minority sharing the advanced standards of the other region) will exchange second-class citizenship for a first-class citizenship plus great privileges based on rarity: its proletarians will exchange hardships-with-snubs for possibly greater hardships with national identification. (Gellner, 1964:171-72)

However, despite the great significance of the *double origin* of the nations for any true comprehension of the subject, I do not pursue an exhaustive elucidation of the nuances resulting from the debates in this matter. The objective of my argumentation is far more modest and I try to understand, not exactly what

[26] Kedourie defends this idea in his book *Nationalism* (1960)

happened or what was needed to come up with a nation, but what has kept them working, and how this has been justified. This question of cohesion led nationalism to conceptualise its basic problems in terms of identity. Therefore, in what follows there is a slight bias towards the theoretical debates on nations and nationalism, even though I try as far as possible not to overlook the historical dimension. The historical conditions for the occurrence of nations help us to understand how the idea of national identity was constructed *de facto*, but they do not necessarily unveil the articulation of ideas that made national identity one of the primary sources of collective solidarity and, at the same time, a traditional limit for everything outside that boundary.

Whatever the form of nationalism proposed, *national identity* is always the answer to the question of what keeps the members of a community together. Therefore, the notion of national identity is what I review next.

3.2 Constructing national identities

The *ad hoc* construction of national identity is one of the first features that jump out in an analysis of the concept. Even before knowing its content, so to speak, scholars know how to deal with the idea of national identity because they have stipulated its function and defined its 'nature'. National identity is an elusive concept, but '…in sociology, anthropology and the humanities, there is a general consensus that collective identities, such as nations, are socially constructed…' (Ehala, 2017:6) This certainty that the bond between the members of the modern communities is not natural dates to the first theories on the social contract.

Since modern communities were not natural, they could be culturally or politically bonded. How far national identities and nations are constructed is a matter of debate. Particularly within the modernist view, there is a realist perspective, exemplified by Gellner (1983). He affirms that nations were created instrumentally to respond to the conditions of modern capitalism but they are real. The anti-realist perspective, defended by Benedict Anderson (1983), also maintains that nations are particularly modern, but imagined -not exactly imaginary-, that is, its claims might not coincide with a real situation. For instance, a nation is an imagined community because even the members of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members and, nevertheless, they share an image of their communion.

National identity works as an empty vessel that can be filled with different

components; diverse features of national identity are emphasised depending on what is believed to provide -or should provide- the social glue of the community. Next, I mention some features that determine the extent, manner and nature of the national identity construction. I just note those features that will help me to construct my argument later, but there are more.

National identity can be ethnic or civic depending if we understand the belonging to the nation in terms of shared ethnicity and culture or in terms of a shared set of political practices and values. But we can also understand this distinction as two different forms of a democratic organisation: a group bound by political governance is a product of the drive towards liberal democracy, and a group bound by culture and ethnicity results from the drive towards organic democracy (Mann, 1995). In fact, this particular way of thinking about modern democracy denotes that the main issue is to define who 'the people' are and not only how or why 'the people' should rule themselves. Nations and states are ways of organising people, but ways that are essentially linked to power struggles. The definition in each case of who constitutes 'the people' of a nation is not a matter outside of struggles for political power.

An equally important way to classify the possible emergence of national identities is as voluntary or non-voluntary. The voluntaristic definition of the national identity denotes the chosen attachment to a core of principles and values, while the involuntary account emphasises attachment to a set of circumstances that cannot be chosen like ethnicity, inherited history, nativity, mother tongue and culture. In the first case, membership is voluntary because the core of principles is chosen or at least accepted, and in the second case, '…membership depends on the accident of origin and early socialization'. (Miscevic, 2014) In some more radical views, like the one asserted by Ignatieff (1993), the civic idea of a nation is close to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the attachment is rational. This particular distinction has an important impact on social cohesion.

Considering that one of the markers to understand the unity of the community is loyalty, we can ask, what are the members of the society loyal to? And then we can find the glue of the community. If we answer that they are loyal to their culture, then the social glue is cultural; if they are loyal to a core of principles giving them the impression of being the agents of their own identity, then the social glue is civic; one is inherited, the other is freely chosen. This distinction leads to two different ideas of national identity and nations. The voluntaristic definition of a nation

is a group of people aspiring to a common political state-like organisation.

There is one last perspective that I found useful in understanding the differences between civic and ethnic nationalisms, and it refers to their function. According to Smith (1991), the external functions of national identity are economic, territorial and political. Particularly in the political sphere, national interest presumes to reflect the national will. National identity also legitimates the institutions, and it does so because it defines the values and character, mores and customs of the nation. The internal functions of national identity include the socialisation of the members. It also bonds members and classes by providing shared values, symbols and traditions. Finally, it also provides individuals with a powerful way to locate themselves in the world. 'This process of self-definition and location is in many ways the key to national identity, but it is also the element that has attracted most doubt and scepticism.' (Smith, 1991:17) The external functions of national identity seem more important and closely related to the civic perspective and the internal functions seem closer to the ethnic descriptions of the nations.

As a matter of fact, the more we move forward in the distinctions, the more diametrical they seem. Not because as we move forward we find bigger differences in factually-existing nations, but because the characterisation by opposition sharpens analytical features. For instance, the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism is used to draw a line between west and east, between the rational and the emotional and, ultimately between inclusive and exclusive forms of nationalism. The distinction denotes a not so hidden hierarchical aim. In general terms, in a similar way, Edward Said describes the way '…European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient…' (1978:3), civic nationalism gains theoretical and moral strength by defining itself in contrast to ethnic nationalism. There is indeed a tendency to consider ethnic nationalism as less evolved than civic nationalism, which could be the result of legitimate issues, but it could also be a consequence of moral prejudice.

> The civic/ethnic dichotomy parallels a series of other contrasts that should set off alarm bells: not only Western/ Eastern, but rational/emotive, voluntary/inherited, good/bad, ours/theirs! Designed to protect us from the dangers of ethnocentric politics, the civic/ethnic distinction itself reflects a considerable dose of ethnocentrism ...' (Yack, 1996:195-96)

It is fair to acknowledge that theories of diversity and plurality, particularly multiculturalism, try to mediate between the two analytical sides of nationalism and, in that regard, to provide a better picture of the real forms of national identity. It is

possible to stress the modernity of nations whilst also acknowledging their roots. After all, ethnic identities are also socially constructed, since ethnic identities are not genetic. Therefore, the key issue is to understand the continuity of ethnic identity without assuming that because something has roots, it is immutable and rigid. Ethnic identities do not necessarily exclude outsiders, and civic ones are not immediately open and inclusive. It is true that political community implies at least some common institutions but abstract and impersonal entities struggle to justify national identity. Multiculturalism is indeed a form of nationalism that places itself somewhere in the middle, between the political and the ethnic. I will develop this idea in Chapter 4 but now is a good moment to locate multiculturalism in the wider discussion on nationalism and emphasise its merit.

The distinctions of nationalism that I have briefly described here seem to denote the same relationship between individuals and the group but in opposite directions. There is indeed a problem trying to figure out if the group is defined by the members or the other way around, they lead to two different ways of understanding national identity. People belonging to a particular group could mean that they cannot be understood apart from this group, that is, they have been shaped by it. In contrast, we can think that a more voluntaristic way of belonging assumes the group is shaped to reflect its members. Do the members of a group provide its character? Or does the character of a group shape the individual? Without a doubt, the relationship between individual and collective identity has to be explored further, but within this dilemma, civic nationalism tends to emphasise the individual agency, while the ethnic stresses the way the group shapes members.

From the different distinctions I mentioned above, we can identify the features that are associated with modern nations, features that have shaped the liberal idea of national identity and set the limits of diversity and plurality. In western democracies, national identity is civic, constructed, political, liberal democratic, voluntaristic, and oriented toward external functions -economic, territorial and political- through institutions. Additionally, it emphasises individual agency over collective determination. What I do next is to analyse how this complex notion of civic national identity guides the possibilities of recognition in western democracies.

3.3 Democracy and recognition

The problems of providing recognition as a form of justice have been treated widely in contemporary political philosophy. If we accept Nancy Fraser's diagnosis, the struggle for recognition became the paradigmatic form of political conflict in the late twentieth century, standing over the issues of social equality and redistribution (1997). Even though it has only recently become the main driver of political theory, recognition has always been an important part of the debates on justice in western democracies. The liberal capitalist social order has been intrinsically founded in differentiated principles of recognition (Honneth, 2004). Problems of recognition are not new by any means but recently, groups defending themselves from cultural domination and claiming recognition took the spotlight in political theory. In fact, we can see that recognition comes along with the construction of national identity. The problem of recognition is so important to modern nation-states that it basically dictates who is and is not part of the community.

Amongst the characteristics of civic nationalism, two that particularly shape recognition: *liberal democracy and shared political practices and values*. In civic nations, recognition is liberal and political. The pros and cons of a civic form of national identity are present in the liberal and political recognition it proposes, including difficulties explaining members' ethnic or religious ties and their allegiance to values, myth and symbols. I am aware that recognition is an exceedingly complex and multidimensional concept, for that reason, I will advocate fostering *deeper* forms of recognition. For now, the political recognition that I describe is exactly where theories on nationalism and the liberal tradition intersect. For my argument, I want to pursue how the historical development of liberal democracy and civic nationalism determined, through paths that continuously overlap, the conditions and limits for the projects on diversity and plurality. I focus on liberal democracy in this section and in the next, I will analyse the core of shared political values and practices.

Democratic nation-states were built on the idea that the people should rule themselves, which is an intellectual development expressed in the philosophical background of liberalism and the Enlightenment. But this general principle of democracy does not directly convey who the people are in each case, and how specifically they should rule themselves, which are two fundamental concerns already present in debates on nationalism. In consequence, notions such as democracy, citizenship and identity became key concepts to both concerns on who

the people are and how they should rule themselves. Correspondingly, national identity and citizenship are concepts that, from complementary perspectives, express the efforts to know who must be recognised as a member of the community. In civic nationalism, the emphasis is on the ideological ties amongst the members forming the core of national identity; likewise, there is an accent on citizenship as the way to secure recognition of members by the nation. In this regard, this particular notion of belonging and recognition through political citizenship and national identity is related to a historical movement towards democracy and the way the liberal tradition embraced it.

Nations and states are ways of organising people; consequently, political identities and recognition exist in the context of power relations derived from particular organisational forms. This is in no way new or unexpected, the development of modern states has been historically associated with power struggles, and indeed we can perceive power in almost all of its main features: 1) A differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying it, 2) centrality in the sense that political relations radiate outward from a centre to periphery, 3) a territorially demarcated area, over which it exercises dominion, and 4) a monopoly of authoritative binding rule-making, the monopoly of the means of physical violence (Mann, 1984:188; Weber, 1978:54-56).

However, as Michael Mann points out, in this context power is not just about controlling the state and radiating influences through its institutions, as some other scholars have rightly stressed (Breuilly, 1993); power is already present in the way the state organises itself, even before any particular group or elite might gain the means to rule. In other words, we can identify power components inherent in democratic forms of organisation. Furthermore, states are forms of exercising power, which becomes clear when we denote features such as sovereignty and territoriality. Organising and defining who is and is not part of the community is a form of exercising power with important consequences. For every democratic state, the definition of who the people are and the recognition that goes with it are ways of exercising power.

Even if, in general terms, all forms of modern democracy move from elite coercion to embedded institutions, following the democratic principle did not lead to solving the problems of identity and recognition. In other words, democracy is not enough to define who belongs to the group, it helps to establish the way they will deal with each other, but it comes after defining the limits of community. According

to Mann (2005), there are two forms of democracy that follow the precept that people should rule themselves providing the base for two differentiated forms of nation-states: ethnic democracy and civil democracy, or organic and liberal as they are also known.

In ethnic democracies, an ethnic majority can rule without going against the democratic principle. Democracy is, therefore, not an exclusive feature of civic groups. On the other hand, civic democracies are not necessarily more inclusive. They have their own definition of who does and who does not belong to the group, therefore, there is no guarantee its inclusiveness will be larger. For instance, Stephen Castles affirms that 'Racism plays a crucial role in consolidating nation-states (…) Racism does not contradict democracy -rather, it helps to consolidate the boundaries of democratic polities by defining who does not belong and can, therefore, be excluded from universalistic principles.' (2000:14) Therefore, democracy is not enough to address the claims of recognition that might have individuals and groups.

At this point, it is convenient to stop for a moment and recapitulate. After a dry succession of distinctions, we might lose sight of what is important. Why is distinguishing between forms of democracy important to issues of identity and recognition? It is salient because this shows that democracy and recognition are not univocally connected. Democracy comes after recognition is already provided.[27] Even more important, the two forms of democracy prescribe different roles for the state that conditions the possible means of recognition. The two forms of democracy assume different forms of group unity. Ethnic nationalism encouraged the aim of founding a democratic political community on ethnic homogeneity and, in consequence, to build an *organic* state with the goal of representing a people that conceives of itself as unique, integral and indivisible. For this reason, Mann also calls it organic democracy.

Under this lens, conflict and sectional interests are transcended by forms of national unity because, to put it in proper philosophical terms, the parts are not greater than the whole. In other words, in order to guarantee the democratic nature of the community, any member of the state must be primarily conceived as part of an organic people. In this case, unity is the unity of a whole, members are part of

[27] We can imagine a situation in which a group vote to grant recognition of someone as a member of the group, exactly in the way that happens in private clubs. In this case democracy is previous to recognition. However, in order to vote there is already a form of recognition that acknowledges those about to vote as members, that is, there is already a

something which transcends them. For this reason, members would trace their identity to some discrete community that maintains its character through ethnic consciousness. In contrast, liberal-civic democracies institutionalise conflict and clashing forces. In this case, '…the state's main role is to mediate and conciliate among competing interest groups. [And even more important] This will tend to compromise differences, not try to eliminate or cleanse them.' (Mann, 2005:55) For this reason, we have traditionally assumed that it is in civic democracy, and not in ethnic democracy, where we could find the ground to plant our efforts in diversity and plurality.

In instances of democracy where the ethnic features were stressed, there was not much room for positive recognition of plurality and diversity, which in some cases led to underline inequality, racism, discrimination, bigotry, and it might translate in efforts of cleansing whole communities. '…if the people is to rule in its own nation-state, and if the people is defined in ethnic terms, then its ethnic unity may outweigh the kind of citizen diversity that is central to democracy.' (Mann, 2005:3) Additionally, nations founded on myths of a supposed ethnic particularity tend to exacerbate antagonisms in contrast to other communities. 'The closer the association between unique people and historic homeland, the more exclusive becomes the nationalism of embattled communities,…' (Smith, 1992:450) But at the same time, with an emphasis on the antagonism also comes the prominence of autonomy: '…unlike classes, ethnic communities are not so interdependent. They can live in their own cleansed communities with their own organic state.' (Mann, 2005:69) Therefore, as we can see, it is generally believed that ethnic nationalism tends toward the exclusion of others. Conversely, the civic form is considered an alternative, a solution to this issue. Moreover, the social cohesion of the ethnic community seems to involve less internal work to achieve and sustain it; and as long as the group is considered as an organic unity, it is intrinsically more stable.

On the opposite side of ethnic democracies, nation-states moved towards civic and democratic forms of organisation, emphasising their liberal values over their ethnic ties and progressively filtering the problems of recognition through liberal principles. The processes towards more civic forms of social cohesion opened the door to the positive recognition of diversity and plurality within the same nation, that is, they pushed the idea of a non-organic unit in which individuals precede the collective and the unity is clearly constructed. This is why the idea of a civic nation

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definition of who belong and who do not belong to the group.

became useful to mitigate the dangers of ethnic nationalism, including essentialising the community. In other words, this move to civic forms of nationalism involved processes of liberalisation, '…resulting in greater *freedom within groups*, and greater *equality between groups*.' (Kymlicka, 2015:224) The idea that the process of liberalisation is the key to better forms of recognition and positive perception of diversity is still powerful (Kymlicka, 2001b).

So far, I argued democracy by itself does not address issues of recognition, but liberal democracy seems to open the door to a non-organic form of unity. Therefore, liberal principles seem to be the key elements allowing a diversity of interests at the expense of institutionalising conflict. As a means of securing justice, recognition of members was increasingly shaped by the principles of liberal democracy. Next, I investigate the features of this process of recognition and liberalisation; in particular, I emphasise a dialectical tension between political recognition and allegiance.

3.4 Liberal allegiance and recognition: the dialectics of national identity and citizenship

In general terms, recognition is understood as a matter of equality in liberal democracies. The fundamental assumption is that recognising individuals or groups as members of a larger community translates immediately into recognising them as *equals*. This is clear when we refer to individuals; as soon as they are recognised as citizens, they are equal in the eyes of the law. There is no formal hierarchy in terms of recognition, it is given as a whole. And even if there is historical evidence of non-incidental arbitrariness and utilitarian criteria for recognising individuals in liberal communities -such as the case of Italians, Irish and Jewish people considered for a while as non-white in accordance with immigration policies in the US (Delgado, 2001:2285; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:77)-, at least in formal terms, once they are recognised as members, they are immediately and without further process considered as equal. Although, at the same time, recognition does not come unconditionally. It implies some sort of basic commitment, a commitment that every nation and state demand from their members: allegiance to the political values and practices of the community.

In contrast to ethnic accounts in which the unity of the community is secured and the state simply reflects its *organic* nature, in liberal accounts, recognition must

be balanced by the allegiance of the members, otherwise, the community's unity would be jeopardised. In a notion that clearly resembles theories of the social contract, membership of the community implies responsibilities and loyalties. A commitment to the nation is expected in return for the protection, rights and recognition that it provides, a commitment that is both political and ethical.

In traditional forms of liberalism, allegiance is essentially pragmatic and *voluntary*, as the core of the social contract might suggest: they assume that a possible violation of the tacit 'clauses' of the social contract will make it null and void, leading each individual to regain their natural liberty and original rights (Rousseau, 1950:I.6). But in the more sophisticated forms of liberalism, there is a more moderated-voluntaristic approach that emphasises deeper roots beyond a direct interchange of rights and responsibilities between the state and its members, including ethical relations. '…nations are ethical communities. In acknowledging a national identity, I am also acknowledging that I owe special obligations to fellow members of my nation which I do not owe to other human beings.' (Miller, 1995:50) However, the balance between providing recognition as an equal and demanding commitment to the political and ethical community is biased. It requires emphasising similarities instead of acknowledging differences.

Let me stop listing particular aspects of the political and ethical commitment to the community for a moment. We have to bear in mind this commitment's aim is to produce the social glue for the community. We know this is the same aim of national identity. Additionally, we have characterised civic national identity as constructed, political, voluntaristic, liberal democratic, and concerned with individual agency. Therefore, it is clear that political and ethical commitment is also constructed -non-natural-, liberal democratic, and voluntaristic. We emphasise the political and ethical over the other features because they justify the institutionalisation of conflict, making space, first for tolerance and then for diversity and plurality. But how do liberal democracies achieve this? 'The institutionalization of interest group struggle, and especially of class struggle, has ensured toleration and the restraint of cleansing by generating a stratified, not an organic, people.' (Mann, 2005:55) With the stratification comes along plurality. In civic nations, contending interests are institutionalised in political parties and the state's main role is to mediate and conciliate among these competing interests.

At the beginning of liberal democracies and their political systems, the competing interests were those of different classes, but eventually, other forms of

identity such as gender and race have demanded recognition as contending interests within the people. These struggles of identity recognition have shaped the current political situation, which is the *leitmotif* of this text. However, what is important to highlight now is the fact that these claims of recognition have been conceptualised and directed by the established means, that is, claiming recognition is believed to be the same as demanding full political rights. In consequence, the struggle, means and output of identity recognition are constrained within the small circle of politics. Anyhow, attracting conflict to the political sphere prevents one or more groups from eradicating others, allowing them to co-exist, but on the other hand, reduces the recognition to a political phenomenon. The conflict between different parties cannot be transcended or abolished, allowing diverse interests and opinions to remain and, in that sense, to be recognised and discussed. Accordingly, all the components of the identity-recognition mechanism are placed in the political perspective, as well as the commitment demanded of the individuals to secure the social cohesion of the community. This is the beginning of political emphasis as *the* way to secure diversity.

The civic conformation of the state allows anyone to achieve citizenship, whatever their ethnicity, religion or race, as long as they are willing to embrace the political principles of the larger group and to engage with the ethical community. However, liberal democracies subordinate recognition to *integration into the mainstream culture;* they do not represent a wider idea of diverse people interacting in contexts of heterogeneous relations, but individuals or groups with particular interests relating in a unique context, the liberal context and dealing in a unique way, the political way. This is the fundamental problem for liberal states in terms of diversity. On the one hand, the room for possible conflict of interest allows diversity within the larger community but, on the other hand, it necessitates further amendments to uphold the state's social cohesion. National identity gets caught in the middle of this dialectical process of allowing conflict and ensuring cohesion. It is always a controlled conflict and, as a result, a controlled diversity and recognition. Just to say it clearly, cohesion is more important than recognition, cohesion has precedence over factual identities. In fact, it is in order to foster social cohesion that national identity is institutionally pushed; national identity, and so allegiance, demanded for social unity. Therefore, in civic democracies national identity is political.

In traditional liberal nationalism, allegiance to the larger society and social

cohesion are condensed in the idea of national identity.

> For liberals like Mill, democracy is government 'by the people', but self-rule is only possible if 'the people' are 'a people'—a nation. The members of a democracy must share a sense of political allegiance, and common nationality was said to be a precondition of that allegiance. (Kymlicka, 1995:52)

But also for contemporary nationalists, national identity is something to pursue.

> …for contemporary liberal nationalists, national identity offers social glue, one which is potentially inclusive and capable of binding people otherwise divided by economic and ethnic differences into a sharing community. (…) national identity contributes to a sense of belonging and solidarity that transcends economic interest and cultural difference.(Johnston et al., 2010:350)

Despite liberal democracies pushing a shared political identity, this is not our only possible allegiance and membership, it is not even clear that these other sides of our identity can be translated into political terms. That is to say, identity and recognition tend to overflow political limits. In general, the main issue can be expressed, as Ami Gutmann does it (1994), asking if citizens with different identities can be represented as equals without recognising their particular identities or, on the contrary, if recognising any difference stands against the aim of social unity and equality pursued in liberal democracies.

So far I have focused on the dialectic tension between recognition and political allegiance expressed in the notions of national identity and political values. However, I try to go a little bit deeper and unveil how is it possible to balance this tension? How can liberal democracies not just institutionalise conflict, but effectively mediate it? The short answer is exactly by being liberal. In a more elaborated explanation, western democracies can mediate conflict by postulating a set of institutions that are by definition *neutral,* and by universalising a core of values and practices. Although, along with this process of institutionalisation there are also processes of individualisation and abstraction.[28] Actually, '…liberalism has also

[28] 'The modern state also represents a historically unique mode of defining and relating its members. Unlike premodem polities which were embedded in and composed of such communities as castes, clans, tribes and ethnic groups, it has increasingly come to be defined as an association of individuals. *It abstracts away their class, ethnicity, religion, social status. and so forth, and unites them in terms of their subscription to a common system of authority, which is similarly abstracted from the wider structure of social relations. To be a citizen is to transcend one's ethnic, religious and other particularities, and to think and act as a member of the political community.* Because their socially generated differences are abstracted away, citizens are homogenized and related to the state in an identical manner, enjoying equal status and possessing identical rights and obligations.' (Parekh, 2000:181-82) Emphasis mine.

taken to heart one of the cardinal experiences of modernity. It is the increasing awareness that reasonable people tend naturally to differ and disagree about the nature of the good life.' (Larmore, 1996:122)

An important part of the problem involves trying to understand the way democratic institutions can do both, on the one hand, to recognise individuals and groups and, on the other, to remain neutral in the public sphere. In Chapter 2 I introduced CRT's critique of neutrality, and in Chapters 4 and 7 I develop further the liberal principles -liberty, equality, justice, etc.-. However, I provide just a glimpse of the notion of liberal principles and values in order to help us follow the argument. 'A natural notion to describe the essential character of liberalism is that of neutrality. The principles of a liberal political order aim to be "neutral" with respect to controversial ideas of the good.' (Larmore, 1996:125) In this way, the institutions and laws have a single political will. If we try a functional definition, the liberal values are those allowing us to keep the political system working and institutionalising conflict; the liberal values are those setting the minimal moral conception of the common good. In a more direct definition:

> Liberalism has been the hope that, despite this tendency toward disagreement about matters of ultimate significance, we can find some way of living together that avoids the rule of force. It has been the conviction that we can agree on a core morality while continuing to disagree about what makes life worth living.(Larmore, 1996:151)

One more word about the dialectic of recognition-allegiance. The commitment demanded from any member of the community is extended to newcomers. Particularly in the case of immigrants, the demand for commitment is unveiled directly, while for the native-born citizens the conditions of allegiance might remain tacitly accepted. '…newcomers must make a visible and tangible expression of their willingness to join the nation, and show that they now accept the responsibilities that arise from membership in the nation as an ethical community.' (Johnston et al., 2010:355) Liberal scholars deeply endorse the idea that immigrants should not be given rights and recognition without expressing their commitment to the ethical community they are becoming part of. It is fair to say that, even if some critics have denounced this as an example of colonial assimilation (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos, 2007; Faist, 2009; Goodin, 2006), it could be a legitimate attempt to secure social unity.

Liberals usually point out that the commitment to the ethical community is demanded from all members, not immigrants alone. Although, it has different implications in each case. Newcomers are expected to show this commitment

constantly and willing to be tested at any time; while most of the native-born citizens are released from this ceaseless public demonstration. In any case, some scholars have pointed out that '…we have seen the emergence of a social and community cohesion agenda and with it a renewed emphasis on strengthening a collective national identity, developing civic ties and prioritising immigrant assimilation.' (Hardy, 2017:2-3) The social and historical context for liberal recognition resulted in assumptions like the assimilationist belief and the acceptance of a social contract at the base of nation-states. They were the price to pay for recognition and the unity of the group, a price that we are still paying.

3.5 Conclusions

I have described the two types of nationalism shaping the debate: civic and ethnic. Their different conceptions of who the people are and how social cohesion should be secured lead to two different forms of constructing communities. However, the differences they usually construct by contrast are mainly analytical and in reality, they frequently overlap. Additionally, I explained that the main function of national identity is to provide the social glue of the community. I paid particular attention to civic nationalism because it is the one allowing a pluralistic community; I characterised it as constructed, political, liberal democratic, voluntaristic and individualistic. Then democracy is unveiled as necessary but not enough to enable plural recognition; ethnic communities can also be democratic. Therefore, for civic nationalists, liberal principles are the key to organise communities beyond the limits of organic unity. They help to construct a plural community by institutionalising conflict and securing social cohesion through a political core of values and practices. As a consequence, there is a dialectic of diversity in which members of the communities should develop an attachment to the political liberal values in return for recognition. The political commitment providing a feeling of belonging is the heart of the idea of national identity. At the same time, citizenship guarantees the political expression of recognition.

Now we are able to affirm that, in civic nationalism the *political recognition of a group is expressed by institutions, through legal means and encapsulated in political rights and policies.* It is a form of recognition without the other. Naturally, the brief analysis I developed in this chapter left several issues unresolved. Do the liberal principles trigger feelings of belonging in us? If it is the case, why? Are

political identity and recognition the correct concepts to deal with diversity? In the end, we can conclude that the situation is paradoxical: civic nationalisms, liberal democracies, allow diversity and plurality, but it is a controlled plurality, a plurality that only works under one paradigm. The paradigm has merits for sure.

> The institutionalization of class conflict has been the main political accomplishment of the modern West, generating liberal and then social democratic states. Class, age, and gender remain as contending interests within the people, recognized as having legitimate conflicts that are institutionalized in multiparty systems. (Mann, 2005:57)

However, at the same time, '…both nationalism and statism were restrained by liberalism,' (Mann, 2005:56) More importantly, this situation has not changed a lot. Even if we hear about processes of liberalisation and efforts to foster diversity and plurality, we still placing the terms and debate exclusively in the political sphere. We are witnessing the constant demands for recognition of different groups, but we come back over and over again to the same political categories and framework. Let me finish this chapter the same way I started it. Francis Fukuyama, in his conference for *The Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs,* said:

> I think that dignity actually lies as a basis of liberal democracies. *We give our citizens dignity by giving them rights*. (…) In the 1960s you had the beginning of a whole series of very important social movements beginning with the civil rights movement for African Americans; the feminist movement; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) rights movement; movement for the disabled; and Native Americans. All of these groups had in common the fact that they were not recognized, that they were invisible to the rest of mainstream American society. They did not get respect, and they wanted it. *It was a necessary act of social justice to demand recognition as equal and full citizens.*[29] (Fukuyama, 2018b).

I cannot help feeling that behind many legitimate claims for dignity and recognition there is more, much more, than a claim for rights; I cannot help feeling that dignity frequently goes beyond institutional recognition and political participation, it lies in what we are, what we want to be and what we can be. Many requests for recognition imply a deeper understanding of identity, which in turn demands stronger forms of recognition. These requests are based on a call for recognition from the other, and not only from an abstract set of institutions. In the next chapters, I analyse the efforts to provide recognition from this political aspect and its limitations to provide stronger forms of recognition.

[29] Emphasis mine.

Chapter 4

Multiculturalism and the problems of modern identity

In Episode Twelve of Joyce's *Ulysses* (2010 [1922]), known as Cyclops, the modern hero, Leopold Bloom, faces allegations of being an outsider. His Jewish-Hungarian roots did not seem to fit with the true *Irish nature*, which was *essentially* Catholic. After Bloom had mentioned that a nation is the same people living in the same place, a character named as 'the citizen' questioned him about his nationality. Bloom responded: Ireland -I was born here. Ireland- He also added that he was Jewish -I belong to a race too, says Bloom, that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment.- The whole scene happens immediately after the citizen complained about Ireland's troubles, which led him to articulate anti-Semitic opinions. Finally, Bloom leaves the place after saying that, in contrast to the citizen's approach involving force, hatred and insults as a way of standing up against injustice, he prefers love and life. Of course, my very brief account cannot emulate the greatness of Joyce's story. Nevertheless, it allows me to call attention to one thing that I find particularly interesting: before being confronted directly, Bloom's reaction had been to ignore the anti-Semitic comments. However, once he is challenged, Leopold reaffirms his identity without hesitation, voicing the persecution and oppression also suffered by his people.

This beautiful piece of literature expresses, more clearly and accurately than this chapter could ever dream, *the situation that has led millions of people to feel they are outsiders in their own home*. Even when Leopold Bloom was as Irish as anyone else in the room, we found him being considered an outsider. A standard analysis of the Episode Twelve would say that it is known as Cyclops in reference to the Book Nine of Homer's *Odyssey* (2007), in which a Cyclops trapped Odysseus and his men in a cave. The one-eyed monster is represented by the narrow view of

the citizen, which stand for a xenophobic form of Irish nationalism. Let me complement this interpretation by developing further the parallels with Homer's story.

In Joyce's book, Bloom is able to show his superior intellect quite easily, disregarding the citizen's views without much effort and leaving when there was nothing else to say and the atmosphere was potentially leading to violence. In a similar manner, Odysseus defeated Polyphemus the Cyclops not by brute force but intellectually. This is very important because it denotes the long tradition that has linked bigotry, xenophobia and oppression to ignorance. Correspondingly, it fosters the idea that the best way to fight back is by intellectual means. In Homer's work, when the monster asked Odysseus who they are and he expressed their identity as Greeks, he and his men suffered the consequences of their otherness, of being in a land where their gods have no influence. Very soon he realised there was no chance of either a direct fight or of a straightforward escape. There was no other way than the slow-pace intellectual tactics.

Now I ask the reader to be kind with my pretentious interpretation. As she surely knows, Odysseus escaped by doing two things. First, he claimed to be *nobody* to protect himself from unwanted attention,[30] which is a direct way of denying his identity. If identity is the answer to the question who am I? Then the only answer that leaves it undetermined is *nobody*. Second, they left the cave hiding underneath the goats, fooling this way Polyphemus by pretending to be part of the only thing he can perceive and permit. They were invisible in the middle of the routine by *integrating* smoothly into the already existing state of affairs.

In the modern world, minorities have been forced to assimilation into the mainstream culture, they have been forced to hide underneath the goats and slip past, they have been pushed to answer they are nobody when expressing who they really are put them in risk. However, the same way Bloom did when he was confronted directly, in recent years minorities have made their voices heard, affirming their identity once again. Multiculturalism is a way to conceptualise the issues that minorities face in western, democratic societies; it is a way to protect their identity and claim recognition. For better or worse, just like Bloom and Odysseus, multiculturalism follows the tradition that keeps thinking that we should fight cyclops and xenophobes with cleverness and progressive enlightenment, which are not always as effective as our heroes made us believe. Despite the efforts, it

[30] Knowing perfectly the consequences of revealing his true *identity* again.

seems that minorities still feel like outsiders in their own home.

In this chapter, I portray the multicultural efforts to expand the modern liberal framework and the proposals of the different projects, particularly the common output that they reach in the idea of multicultural nationalism. The chapter is divided into 8 sections before its Conclusion. In the first section, I provide a brief definition of multiculturalism that will allow us to go deeper into the specific characteristics of the different multicultural proposals. I argue that there are three levels of analysis: philosophical, theoretical-political and the level of public policies. I then show how liberalism, modernity, Enlightenment and even contractarianism form the philosophical and historical context of multiculturalism. However, I also mention that it belongs to a new form of liberalism that pushes the boundaries of the old one further and further. The next three sections correspond to the description of the three principal forms of multicultural theory: liberal, communitarian and what I call the second wind of multiculturalism. I portray each by emphasising distinctive features. However, I pay particular attention to the way one by one expands the classic interpretation of liberalism: liberal multiculturalism, represented by Will Kymlicka, introduces the notion of group-differentiated rights, which tears down the idea of a *uniformity* in the application of policies and norms; communitarian multiculturalists, such as Charles Taylor, argue that there is no need of state *neutrality,* a community can be at the same time liberal and foster a particular idea of good life; finally, Bhikhu Parekh, as representative of the second wind of multiculturalism, emphasises that practices and not principles of reason are the source of morality and plurality, therefore, liberalism is just one amongst different options for organising plural life.

Section 6 describes the assumptions and consequences of social unity and national identity. These notions explain why members of a community come and remain together, then I argue that the way multicultural theory solve this issue is the same as civic nation-states, that is, through a form of national identity that provides space for political plurality. Sections 7 and 8 delineate how multiculturalism is a form of nationalism and its main elements: realist, voluntaristic and cultural.

After this chapter, I will be able to affirm that multiculturalism, the same way than civic nationalism, focus on political identity and its efforts to expand the liberal framework reach their limit there. In the next chapter I complement this idea by showing how an overemphasis on the political might hinder other forms of recognition expected by minorities. *Political identity in modern states is not enough*

to provide a strong form of recognition and a direct valuing of minorities. It helps the practical integration of minority groups into the mainstream society but it does not necessarily lead to a deep and genuine recognition of the value of minorities. In other words, the political recognition of an oppressed group does not always reach the strong recognition that is expected from a multicultural society.

4.1 A brief definition of multiculturalism

There are different ways to understand multiculturalism. In this section, I specify what I understand by multiculturalism and describe its main features. Firstly, I want to mention that multiculturalism is a liberal project. In the next section I argue in more detail which aspects of multicultural theory I consider liberal. I beg the reader to accept this for the sake of the argument until I clarify it properly.

As far as I only review liberal forms of multiculturalism, it is necessary to distinguish those from other *empirical* instances. There are other forms of *de facto* multiculturalism that do not necessarily develop robust theories, limiting themselves to the peaceful coexistence of different human groups. These empirical forms of multiculturalism are not the subject of this text and they are not considered here under the term *multiculturalism* because they do not translate their peaceful coexistence into democratic rights and individual freedoms. In fact, we can take this chance to highlight another very important feature of liberal multiculturalism, namely, it assumes that achievements in bringing down hierarchical relations and improving equality, democracy and individual freedom are expressed in terms of rights, policies and liberties.

> LMC is a distinctly liberal democratic form of multiculturalism, grounded in core liberal values of freedom, equality and democracy, and to be evaluated for its effects on these values. It therefore differs from non-liberal or illiberal forms of multiculturalism, of which there are many historic examples, in which groups agree to terms of peaceful coexistence while remaining indifferent to the freedoms or democratic rights of individuals. (Kymlicka, 2015:213)[31]

Another way to describe this difference is by referring to strong and weak multiculturalism.[32] Strong multiculturalism denotes a commitment to the defence of

[31] The reader will notice that I mostly draw on Kymlicka's definition of multiculturalism. This is because it directly presents itself as liberal, therefore, it is easier to perceive the features I want to emphasise. Additionally, it is simpler to sign post the discrepancies with other multicultural approaches taking liberal multiculturalism as a reference.

[32] David Goldberg (2004) has an alternative distinction using descriptive and normative

civil rights for minorities based on their cultures; weak multiculturalism does not seek citizenship rights, only recognition of cultural diversity in the private sphere. (O'Neill, 1999:222) Therefore, the public and the private spheres serve as a boundary between strong and weak multiculturalism. In most instances, especially in political philosophy, when we refer to multiculturalism, we refer to strong and liberal multiculturalism, even though strong and weak multiculturalism do not necessarily exclude each other and can be complementary.

The solution proposed by strong multiculturalism is moving forward in guaranteeing citizenship within the framework of liberal democracies. Citizenship is basically understood as a concept composed by at least three dimensions: 1) citizenship as a legal status –rights and obligations-, 2) citizens as political agents, and 3) citizenship as membership of a political community –identity- (Leydet, 2014). Strong multiculturalism considers that a citizen should be more than simply a member of a political community, entitled to certain rights, and indebted to fulfil some duties. Its concept of citizenship is not completely descriptive, but also prescriptive. It moves back and forward between what is considered *de facto* a citizen in western democracies and what should be the case considering social phenomena as immigration, indigenous settlements and national independence movements.

A significant contribution of multiculturalism to liberal theory is the idea of group-differentiated rights and policies within the general democratic framework of western nation-states. Kymlicka affirms that

> …it is legitimate, and indeed unavoidable, to supplement traditional human rights with minority rights. A comprehensive theory of justice in a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individuals regardless of group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or 'special status' for minority cultures. (1995:6)

Subsequently, multiculturalists define what groups are legitimate candidates for differentiated rights, always keeping in mind the main criteria of equality and abolishment of hierarchical relations. In general terms, they are labelled minorities; more specifically Kymlicka defines the three minority groups taken as the standard objects of multiculturalism: indigenous peoples, national minorities and immigrant groups (1995:11-14). In the case of Taylor, multiculturalism refers to minorities in a more general way but he usually uses the same examples of national minorities, migrant groups and indigenous peoples. Parekh prefers the term cultural communities, which usually includes religious groups, however, they usually are

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multiculturalism instead of strong and weak, but in essence they are equivalent.

migrant groups. Broadly speaking, according to the multicultural liberal theory, these three groups look for different pathways to recognition and accommodation within the framework of western democracies: indigenous peoples look for land and self-government rights; national minorities look for regional autonomy, including official language recognition, and immigrant groups look for accommodation rights.

In relation to minority groups and their claims, Kymlicka has developed an index to measure how far western democratic states have implemented differentiated minority rights through multicultural policies.[33] For my present purposes, it is enough to mention its indicators to evaluate the multicultural policies, since I just want to convey a general idea of what multiculturalism thinks should be group-differentiated rights for minorities.

For indigenous minorities, there are at least nine indicators: recognition of land rights, recognition of self-government, upholding or signing of treaties, recognition of cultural rights (language, hunting/fishing, religion), recognition of customary laws, guarantees of representation in the central government, constitutional affirmation of their status of indigenous peoples, support of international instruments of indigenous rights, and affirmative action. For national minorities, there are six indicators: federal or quasi-federal territorial autonomy, official language status, a guarantee of representation in the central government, public funding of minority language, constitutional affirmation of multinationalism, and autonomous international personality in the international bodies. Finally, for immigrants, there are eight indicators: constitutional affirmation of multiculturalism and a government ministry to implement policies, the adoption of multiculturalism in school curriculum, ethnic representation in public media, exemptions for dress code, dual citizenship, funding for ethnic organisations, funding for bilingual education, and affirmative action for disadvantaged immigrant groups.

Through these indicators, it is possible to distinguish some classic concepts of political philosophy like recognition, the Other, the right of autonomy, self-determination, cultural and national identity, as well as social and political representation, accommodation, ethnicity and citizenship. Other concepts better fit the sphere of politics and social policy such as school curriculum, bilingual education and dress codes. These are only some problems and issues multiculturalism deals with, which are intertwine at different levels.

I believe it is possible to distinguish at least three different levels in

[33] The index is available on http://www.queensu.ca/mcp

multicultural theory. The first level is ontological, represented by the premises of liberal political theory, contractualism, modernity, and any other intellectual tradition in which its core concepts make sense. The second level, the theoretical, corresponds to the specific construction of each multicultural theory, which permanently disputes the perspectives and theories at the first level. In this sense, different constructions of multiculturalism are possible when we emphasise or deny premises of liberalism, contractualism or even communitarianism. Lastly, the third level refers to practical implementation through particular policies and procedures in specific places. At the ontological level, categories get drawn into theories by Taylor, Parekh and Kymlicka, not necessarily to endorse them but also to criticise them. The philosophical context provides fundamental concepts used in the theoretical level but also a rich tradition of questions and issues that has to be faced.

Certainly, the three levels overlap and are clearly interconnected. The distinction is purely analytical and does not divide multiculturalism into sharp realms or refer to definite properties. I do not claim that the philosophical level is not theoretical in its nature; I say we can trace the concept and issues driving multiculturalism to older and more general issues. However, this analytical distinction provides more clarity in the portrayal of multicultural theory and for its critical evaluation. We can ask, is it possible to shape a multicultural theory outside the limits of liberalism? Are western democracies the only ones who can develop multicultural societies? Are multicultural policies reproducing some sort of hierarchical order themselves? Is multicultural theory changing fundamental power relations and therefore hierarchical ideologies or just providing superficial solutions? These questions are important for my project and depend on the analysis of the three dimensions and their interrelations.

In the next sections, I describe the particularities of the first two levels.[34] First I argue that liberalism, the Enlightenment and modernity are the foundations of multiculturalism at the philosophical and historical levels. Then I present a typology of multiculturalism where we can better perceive the different approaches that Kymlicka, Taylor and Parekh adopt by assuming different stances in reference to the philosophical concepts of liberalism and modernity. Finally, I analyse further the assumptions underlying the concepts of social unity and national identity, and their convergence in what I call multicultural nationalism. If we have to summarise the

[34] I do not disregard the importance of the third level. Multicultural policies are very important, however, there are beyond the objectives of my text.

brief definition I just crafted as a sort of mantra to be repeated throughout the rest of the chapter, we can say that multiculturalism is a liberal programme, centred in group-differentiated rights and institutional oriented way to protect minorities and their culture.

4.2 The philosophical and historical contexts: liberalism, modernity and political plurality

Multiculturalism is theoretically rooted in political philosophy and deals with some of its key concepts -such as identity, difference, recognition, social justice, liberty, equality and citizenship-, as well as the rejection of homogeneous and monocultural nation-states. As a whole, what characterises it is a commitment to '…recognizing rights to cultural maintenance and community formation, and linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination (Castles, 2000:5).[35] Different versions of multiculturalism are possible by emphasising or ignoring particular aspects of any of these concepts. Nevertheless, the diversity of approaches considered *multicultural* never goes beyond a unitary modern perspective. In other words, they all subscribe, explicitly or implicitly, to the same philosophical tradition.

Moving one fathom deeper, multiculturalism is not just rooted in political philosophy as a discipline but in one particular theoretical perspective: liberalism. Liberalism is itself diverse and a source of debate. However, it can be broadly understood as a perspective where liberty, equality, democracy, individual freedom and universal human rights are the core values (Dworkin, 1978; Gaus, Courtland, & Schmidtz, 2015). The diversity of both approaches, liberalism and multiculturalism, makes generalisation difficult. Nonetheless, I argue the three forms of multiculturalism are liberal in different ways while keeping their own character; all are modern socio-political projects that trust state institutions to push positive policies. I do not claim that liberalism can be reduced to institutionalism or to simply pushing progressive policies through those means. Yet there is a 'minimum' liberal base in each multicultural approach.[36] As I said before, the multicultural theories I

[35] Cited in (Vertovec, 2001a) and (Meer & Modood, 2018:35)

[36] It can be argued that the 'minimum' liberal referred here is a 'phantom' concept, that is, it does not really exist as a form of liberal thought. However, I do not deal with a particular liberal configuration. I am interested in the assumptions and commitments that the multicultural theories encounter when they have to deal with diversity issues. The real

analyse here incrementally criticise a core of liberal assumptions. In consequence, they have different understandings of they own place within the liberal tradition. However, in their theoretical articulation they keep some inherited liberal assumptions. Even if communitarians and the second wind of multiculturalism pretend to take distance from more canonical forms of liberal thought, they face the same problems as the liberal tradition and they solve them sometimes in very similar ways. In other words, even if they criticise liberalism, they are not radical approaches able to completely break the liberal structure. They remain within the limits of notions such as national identity, citizenship and human rights.

In a closer look at the two definitions, the reader can notice a flagrant discrepancy between individual rights supported by liberalism and the community formation rights supported by multiculturalism. This inconsistency, along with the non-universalistic character of group-differentiated rights, seems enough to perceive two fundamentally dissimilar perspectives. In fact, this difference has led to debate whether multiculturalism can be truly liberal (Barry, 2001). A point I later extensively develop. In fact, this debate, translated as group-differentiated rights versus individual rights, consumes much of multiculturalism's theoretical energies. Leaving this point aside for a moment, we can affirm that in general terms multiculturalism can be fairly characterised as rooted in liberalism.

In turn, we can distinguish at least two forms of liberalism: the classical or 'old' liberalism and the 'new' or social justice centred model (Gaus et al., 2015). The main difference between old and new liberalism is reflected in how they consider liberty, private property and their relation. In a few words, in old liberalism private property and liberty are intimately related, while for new liberals there is not an inviolable relation between freedom and property.

Along with this shift in the perspective, political philosophers such as John Rawls, in his influential work *A Theory of Justice* (1999 [1971]), focused on developing theories of social justice within the framework of this new liberalism. Even though new liberalism does not necessarily lead to the development of multicultural theory, multicultural theorists use new liberal standpoints as a base for their projects and expand it, particularly those who follow Kymlicka's work. 'Group-differentiated measures that secure and promote this access [to information, freedom of expression and association] may, therefore, have a legitimate role to play in a liberal theory of justice.' (Kymlicka, 1995:84) Multiculturalism is a fuller

criticism of liberalism is the one that the three multicultural theories develop together.

theory of justice in state-minority relations that ask different questions (Kymlicka, 2018b), a theory particularly concerned with minority rights and minorities' place in larger societies. It is a liberal theory of social justice for contemporary plural societies that highlights how liberal principles cannot plainly follow processes of majoritarian decision-making, but they have to make special amendments for minorities. By stressing their shared principles and values, I insist that Kymlicka's multiculturalism is a liberal project.

The case of communitarian multiculturalism has to be argued differently. Communitarianism and liberalism are not always considered compatible. However, communitarian multiculturalists still embrace liberty, social justice, democracy, equality and other values of the new liberalism, as well as the basic idea of supporting minority rights (Taylor, 1994:59). On the other hand, they do not believe minority rights should be limited by individual liberty. This rejection of individual welfare in favour of collective interest results in a different development of multicultural theory and liberalism. In contrast to the classical form of liberalism that insists on the uniform application of rules and does not support collective goals, communitarian liberalism endorses cultural survival over equal treatment (Taylor, 1994:60-61). Steven Rockefeller calls this 'Taylor's Quebec brand of liberalism' (1992:89); and Michael Walzer (1992) names it *Liberalism 2*. Communitarian thinkers like Taylor and Walzer identify themselves as liberal thinkers, therefore, it is not so hard to argue that communitarian multiculturalism is part of the liberal tradition, although in a new form. On the other hand, communitarian multiculturalism enriches the analysis of plurality and diversity in western societies with other traditions. Liberal and communitarian multiculturalism adopt different standpoints on the pre-eminence of individual liberty and some other issues but both are within the limits of liberalism. Even Charles Taylor, being one of the most prominent communitarian theorists, can be considered liberal in this broader sense. As O'Neill asserts:

> Taylor argues for a type of liberalism "grounded very much on judgments about what makes a good life-judgments in which the integrity of cultures has an important place." Taylor's preferred version of multicultural liberalism is therefore willing to allow for collective goals. (1999:240)

Parekh embarked in a critical revision of some of multiculturalism's most relevant ideas, trying to unveil their presuppositions and suggesting changes where he thought appropriate. He supports fundamental ideas that shape multiculturalism, like collective rights as depicted by Kymlicka, and the recognition of other cultures

advocated by Taylor. However, Parekh's place in multicultural theory is not easy to assess because of the dialectical nature of some of his stands. For instance, as Paul Kelly points out, Parekh '…rejects liberalism as a universal applicable philosophy of politics and as a domestic political ideology, but he is not "illiberal", and he defends many liberal values.' (2015:31) Parekh's multiculturalism is egalitarian, but differs from Kymlicka's post-Rawlsian egalitarianism. In the same vein, Parekh is a communitarian thinker, close to Taylor's approach but not exactly in the same way. Kelly would suggest that Parekh is closer to Walzer's political philosophy and his idea of complex equality developed in *Spheres of Justice* (1983). Additionally, Parekh also introduces his interest in partition and Gandhi's philosophy as examples of non-liberal traditions dealing with diversity and plurality (Parekh, 1989). While in a different way, the second wind of multiculturalism is still liberal, especially in relation to institutions and civic national identity, which leads to notions such as intercultural dialogue and minimal universalism.

From a historical perspective, multiculturalism follows a long tradition inaugurated by Enlightenment ideals and historical events that were the basis for modern, republican, and constitutional democracies, especially the American and French revolutions (Kymlicka, 2001b). These historical events are closely connected to liberal principles and they eventually led to modern theories of justice. The Enlightenment represents the change from a medieval hierarchical order to a society knitted together by the ideals of human reason, freedom and equality. This is the same idea that gave rise first to civic forms of nationalism[37] and now supports forms of minority political plurality. As a result, multiculturalism can be considered an idea developed in the context of western, democratic nation-states as part of post-Enlightenment modernity. It is situated alongside the social and political movements in the aftermath of WWII and in the midst of very complex phenomena of diversity, migration and globalisation (Kymlicka, 2012b). For that reason, a little further explanation is needed to situate multiculturalism in more particular circumstances.

From a very particular perspective, Brian Barry (2001) argues that multiculturalism is an anti-Enlightenment movement, therefore, it is neither compatible with egalitarian liberalism nor with Rawls' theory of justice. I believe this description is mistaken and it has already been refuted (Parekh, 2002; Tully, 2002).

[37] 'The civic nation, Ignatieff argues, is a community created by the choice of individuals to honor a particular political creed. As such, it is relatively compatible with the Enlightenment legacy of rationalism and individualism, since it turns "national belonging [into] a form of rational attachment."' (Yack, 1996)

Completely the opposite: 'These third-generation universal cultural rights, which protect minorities from the tyranny of democratic majorities, also derive from the Enlightenment (among other sources)' (Tully, 2002:105) Multiculturalism is an enlightened modern theory adapted to a new context of plural societies, a third-generation that keeps one tradition alive.

The consideration of multiculturalism as a modern project becomes increasingly important because some general critiques of modernity apply to multiculturalism. Issues like the cognitive-instrumental rationality -pragmatism-, universalism, essentialism, structural power relations, overemphasis on institutions, blind faith in progress, bureaucracy and unsatisfactory application of policies form the criticism that multiculturalism has to face. It inherited not only values and principles, but also some unfortunate practices: some came from hardcore Enlightenment's theoretical assumptions, some others from concrete instances of nation-states dealing with forms of civic plurality. For instance, the social and historical context for the liberal and modern principles and values resulted in assumptions like the assimilationist belief and the social contract acceptance of nation-state origins.

> From the late eighteenth century, countries such as France and the United States shared the Enlightenment assumption that nations were composed of individuals with common ideals who engaged in a mutually agreeable contract to form a mutually beneficial society. This Gesellschaft view of the nation as an 'association' of like-minded people, which others who accepted their political, social, and cultural principles could join without much difficulty, assumed that newcomers could be absorbed, or assimilated. (Grillo, 1998:15)

Some of the modern foundations that allowed the rise of liberalism and multiculturalism as positive and desirable projects are, to some extent, the same ones preventing their success. Multiculturalism is caught in the same position as modernity itself, that is, good intentions misled by wrong assumptions. For instance, Kymlicka often describes the multicultural aims as an attempt to fight traditional hierarchies and social injustice. He asserts that:

> Prior to World War II, ethnocultural and religious diversity in the West was characterized by a range of illiberal and undemocratic relationships of hierarchy, justified by racialist ideologies that explicitly propounded the superiority of some peoples and cultures and their right to rule over others. These ideologies were widely accepted throughout the Western world and underpinned both domestic laws (e.g., racially biased immigration and citizenship policies) and foreign policies (e.g. in relation to overseas colonies.) (2012b:5)

However, the origins of those illiberal and undemocratic relations of hierarchy are to some extent liberal side effects. The state of affairs prior to WWII

was also the outcome of some of the principles and values conforming modern societies and nation-states. In modern societies, as Grillo affirms (1998:14), the state is interested in social relations and identities, but at the foundational level, it pushes homogeneity because the basic construction of a nation-state is built upon the idea of a common culture and identity. Intellectual traditions like the Frankfurt School criticised modern and Enlightenment assumptions in the most Kantian manner, by trying to show their limits. Enlightenment ideas had a positive impact on history and they allowed us to move from medieval political and social structures to democratic, republican and constitutional nation-states. However, at the same time the liberation promised by the Enlightenment is built upon the domination of nature and it has extended to the domination of otherness in general. Modern progress was made possible only by imposing an instrumental reason (Horkheimer, 1985) and the consequential standardisation of people (Marcuse, 1991). Modernity as a whole and Enlightenment as its theoretical foundation have substantial limits and questionable assumptions.

> …efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic. (…) the extravagant expectation that the arts and the sciences would promote not only the control of natural forces, but would also further understanding of the world and of the self, would promote moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even the happiness of human beings. (Habermas & Ben-Habib, 1981:9)

As mentioned by Habermas, the implications of modern and Enlightened assumptions expands to important dimensions of our life. Now that I have outlined to the intersection of Enlightenment, modernity and multiculturalism. I can briefly mention another important factor in multicultural theory:[38] social contract theory. John Rawls' work is a good example of how liberalism and social contract theory converge. Despite the different perspectives allowed under social contract theory, mostly Hobbesian or Kantian versions, 'the contractual tradition expresses the Fundamental Liberal Principle.' (Gaus et al., 2015), that is, any restriction on liberty must be justified. Social contract theory also deals with the issue of what could motivate a group of persons to live together and build larger societies, under what terms do they come to an agreement and how this concord guarantees morality and justice. The answers to these problems are the theories developed by liberals and social contractarians. Their views on these issues converge on key ideas such as individual liberty. 'Contractarian social contract theories take individuals to be the

[38] There is another foundation I treat in a later section: nationalism.

best judges of their interests and the means to satisfy their desires. For this reason, there is a close connection between liberalism and contractarianism.' (Cudd, 2018) Liberal multiculturalism parallels this idea. Just to mention one instance, there is an over-emphasis on the idea that '…immigration entails accepting the legitimacy of state enforcement of liberal principles, so long as immigrants know this in advance, and none the less voluntarily choose to come.' (Kymlicka, 1995:170) On the other hand, Taylor rejects social contract theories when he criticises atomism (1985a), and Parekh does so when he analyse moral monism (Parekh, 2000). Therefore, they do not develop a positive view of social contract and, yet they keep facing some of its fundamental problems. Social contract theory is an important factor of multicultural theories, not because they always endorse their ideas, but because it forces them to face fundamental problems that demand a stand, like how are social cohesion and freedom compatible.

Liberalism, the Enlightenment, modernity, and conctractualism are, I have argued, the building blocks of multicultural theories. Each theory deals with this heritage differently, assembling an alternative mosaic out of these same pieces – leading us to the second level.

4.3 Liberal multiculturalism

There are different expressions of multicultural theory. Liberal multiculturalism[39] (LMC) is the most hegemonic, although communitarian and new multiculturalism[40] (Vertovec, 2001a) are also relevant. All these expressions are strong forms of multiculturalism; they are compatible with the implementation of minority cultural rights, in terms of autonomy, language, self-determination and accommodation. Next, I portray the particularities of each of these approaches: liberal, communitarian and new multiculturalism. I present LMC in this section and communitarian and new multiculturalism subsequently.

Liberal multiculturalism develops a dual commitment, on one hand to the

[39] Liberal refers in this case to that kind of multiculturalism that *openly* declares itself such. Clearly, I refer mostly to Kymlicka's approach, but it goes further and includes all the multicultural perspectives that define themselves in direct connection to theories of justice, and emphasise the liberal context as the proper one to deal with diversity issues.

[40] I mentioned the label *new multiculturalism* because it has become a relatively well-known term, although I think *second wind* describe it better. Geoffrey Brahm proposed to name it the Bristol School of multiculturalism (Brahm Levey, 2019) but Kymlicka has recently argued against this conceptualisation. (2019)

cultural rights of minority groups, and on the other to a core of liberal principles, particularly the principle of individual autonomy. Most of the difficulties and criticisms come from the tension between these two stances. However, Kymlicka argues there is not a real tension between societal culture[41] and liberal theory, on the contrary, culture is a value for liberalism. '…group-differentiated rights that protect minority cultures can be seen, not only as consistent with liberal values, but as actually promoting them.' (Kymlicka, 1995:106) According to Kymlicka, individual rights do not lead to atomism or instrumental relationships between people. On the contrary, they are a *sine qua non* for building healthy social relationships. In general, LMC is a way to address the justice of minority rights claims and consequently shows itself useful and necessary for liberal democracies. Despite modern states' claimed foundation of democracy and equality, they are not neutral with respect to culture, they tend to support and sometimes impose a mainstream culture over minorities and, therefore, special rights for groups are needed. LMC, as a theory of special rights for minorities, is a way to improve social justice in western democracies, where sometimes the laws are not yet developed to embrace multiple cultural expressions.

As O'Neill asserts (1999), for Kymlicka culture means cultural structure and it fundamentally functions as a context of choice. Even when he criticises Dworkin's idea of a cultural structure (Kymlicka, 1995) exposed in *A Matter of Principle* (1985) for being rigid and formal, Kymlicka thinks a cultural structure, considered as an understanding of history, language and societal culture, is necessary to make meaningful choices. Therefore, the cultural structure is in accordance with individual liberty. '…individual freedom is tied in some important way to membership in one's national group; and that group-specific rights can promote equality between the minority and majority.' (Kymlicka, 1995:52)

Culture is important because our choices and by extension our freedom are determined by our cultural heritage; culture is the context for individual choices and, thus, it is also relevant for liberal theory. O'Neill (1999) claims that according to Kymlicka, culture should be included as a primary good in the sense of Rawls'

[41] 'By a societal culture, I mean a territorially-concentrated culture, centred on a shared language which is used in a wide range of societal institutions, in both public and private life—schools, media, law, economy, government, etc.—covering the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life. I call it a societal culture to emphasize that it involves a common language and social institutions, rather than common religious beliefs, family customs, or personal lifestyles.' (Kymlicka, 2001d:18)

theory of justice, that is, a good which people need, no matter their particular way of life. In consequence, multiculturalism is eventually translated into seeking rights as the main artery to modern justice. As I said above, referring to Castles' words, multiculturalism wants rights to cultural maintenance and cultural formation. The moral aim of social equality and protection for vulnerable groups become, from the LMC perspective, the need for cultural rights. 'Some groups are unfairly disadvantaged in the cultural market-place, and political recognition and support rectify this disadvantage.' (Kymlicka, 1995:109)

Despite it seems paradoxical, within the LMC perspective, cultural rights for minorities are limited by principles of individual liberty, democracy, and social justice because their function is to secure these principles. '[L]iberals can and should accept a wide range of group-differentiated rights for national minorities and ethnic groups, without sacrificing their core commitments to individual freedom and social equality.' (Kymlicka, 1995:126) As a result, cultural rights are complements of traditional human rights. With the intention of clearly drawing that limit, Kymlicka distinguishes between external protections and internal restrictions.

External protections refer to a community's rights to limit economic or political power embodied by a larger group; an internal restriction is a limit that a group imposes on any of its members. External protections are the mechanisms to legitimately develop differentiated rights for minorities because they protect the group's existence and identity. They allow people to maintain their way of life if they decide to do so. In other words, it does not imply a particular imposition but secures an existent societal culture that is just one amongst a range of possibilities. Therefore, individuals still have to choose whether they follow the practices and institutions of a particular societal culture or adopt new ones. External protections only secure the possibility of societal cultures, they do not impose them. On the other hand, internal restrictions suppose the imposition of a particular societal culture that forces and represses individuals refusing partially or completely to follow its practices, institutions or values. Fostering external protections and preventing internal restrictions, liberal societies guarantee that group rights do not overshadow individual autonomy. In LMC as defended by Kymlicka, the main effort is to support both, individual autonomy and equality between cultural groups.

Group-differentiated rights are shaped by the necessities of the particular group. In order to understand the conditions for each minority group to incorporate into the larger society, liberal multiculturalists argue that it is necessary to consider

that different groups might ask for different things. In general, the claims of accommodation and recognition of minorities can be expressed in three distinct group-differentiated rights: self-government rights, polyethnic rights and special representation rights (Kymlicka, 1995).

Following from the differentiation of minority groups is a second distinction in multicultural theories, between different types of multicultural states particularly between '…"multination" states (where cultural diversity arises from the incorporation of previously self-governing, territorially concentrated cultures into a larger state) and 'polyethnic' states (where cultural diversity arises from individual and familial immigration).' (Kymlicka, 1995:6) The term multiculturalism could refer to multinational or polyethnic perspectives depending on the kind of minority taken into account. As their names denote, multinational states bring together in the same political community groups that already have existing national identities; polyethnic states do the same but with ethnic groups resulting from immigration.

According to Kymlicka (1995), multiculturalism is often invoked without making a clear distinction between nations and ethnic groups, obscuring the limits and aims behind the idea of multicultural States. Therefore, a country could embrace polyethnic policies and not necessarily multinational ones, or vice versa, leading to different multicultural claims. It could happen that one state can successfully incorporate national minorities, but not immigrant groups or indigenous peoples or any of the other possible combinations. This sort of nuances confirms that multicultural theory shall clearly distinguish the 'nature' of the minority groups looking for integration and their demands, but it also denotes that the lines between them are not always easy to draw.

Several criticisms could be made about this perspective, but one is the most frequent and important is the paradox resulting from the idea that particular cultures can defend themselves from assimilation only on the grounds of liberal individualism (O'Neill, 1999); in other words, colonial and postcolonial assimilation can only be fought by liberal integration. Consequently, despite the efforts, they seem just two ways leading to the very same place. In that case, the line that Kymlicka tries to draw becomes blurry.

Even if in the expression liberal multiculturalism, liberal is the adjective and multiculturalism the noun, in the theory built around this concept, liberalism is more fundamental than multiculturalism. *Liberal multiculturalism is indeed multicultural liberalism*. This hierarchy is evident in Kymlicka; he suggests that multiculturalism is

a tool for different cultures to move forward into more liberal societies. ‘So, as a general rule, liberals should not prevent illiberal nations from maintaining their societal culture, but should promote the liberalization of these cultures.’ (Kymlicka, 1995:95) Multiculturalism is a way to liberalise cultures without ‘harm’ to them. National minorities, immigrant groups and indigenous peoples are subjects of protection solely to enter into a larger process of liberalisation. For liberal multiculturalism, the ideal world is not where all cultures can live together despite their differences, but where all the cultures are liberalised keeping just enough of its flavour.

4.4 Communitarian multiculturalism

Apparently the opposite of liberal multiculturalism, communitarian multiculturalism rejects the idea that individuals are prior to the community. In consequence, individual rights are not more important than social concerns. For communitarian multiculturalism, like the iteration defended by Taylor and Walzer, minority groups need differentiated rights. It establishes that any judgement depends on the particular framework of the community, including those that have historically configured the liberal societies as just and democratic. ‘…the standards of justice must be found in forms of life and traditions of particular societies and hence can vary from context to context.’ (Daniel Bell, 2016) In other words, communitarian multiculturalism denies the universalism of classical liberalism. In consequence, just as there are voices claiming LMC is not a liberal project, so do other forms of liberalism claim that communitarianism, in general, is not liberal. Usually this debate is portrayed as communitarianism versus cosmopolitanism, the latter clearly being liberal and communitarianism relativistic. However, I already mentioned in what sense communitarian multiculturalism is liberal. In Chapter 6 I elaborate some features of this debate. It is enough to mention now that the debate develops on two intertwined dimensions. On one hand, there is discussion on whether there are universal principles or all what we have believed to be universal principles are only historical assumptions; on the other hand, the problem is knowing if individual rights are prior to any collective context.

More importantly, communitarian multiculturalism shows that the principles of individuality are not something beyond any possible negotiation, as LMC somehow assumes. As I mentioned above, Kymlicka justifies the adoption of group-

differentiated rights as a means to secure real possibilities for individual ones. In the case of communitarian multiculturalism, collective goods are neither a mean for the individual nor less fundamental. When tensions between cultural issues and individual affairs come to the surface, *sometimes* collective goals can be imposed over individual ones. And similarly to Kymlicka, Taylor articulates a criterion to know under what circumstances it is possible and desirable to choose cultural needs -cultural survival, in his terms- over individual rights. But first we must differentiate fundamental rights, privileges, and immunities.

Taylor believes in a core of liberal values that express fundamental liberties. He says,

> But now the rights in question are conceived to be the fundamental and crucial ones that have been recognized as such from the very beginning of the liberal tradition: rights to life, liberty, due process, free speech, free practice of religion, and so on. On this model, there is a dangerous overlooking of an essential boundary in speaking of fundamental rights to things like commercial signage in the language of one's choice. One has to distinguish the fundamental liberties, those that should never be infringed and therefore ought to be unassailably entrenched, on one hand, from privileges and immunities that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy—although one would need a strong reason to do this—on the other. (Taylor, 1994:59)

Nevertheless, those values depend on the context and have their limits. We can try to find a foundation for the principles and say, for instance, that most of these assume the idea of no harm to others. Despite that, this idea is neither individual nor universal in any way, but cultural and collective. What is considered harmful may vary from culture to culture and understood in different ways. Contrary to classic liberalism, its perspective is not and cannot be neutral. Michael Walzer says that even the idea of justice itself is embedded in particular cultural constructions.

> Justice is relative to social meanings. Indeed, the relativity of justice follows from the classic non-relative definition, giving each person his due, as much as it does from my own proposal, distributing goods for "internal" reasons. These are formal definitions that require, as I have tried to show, historical completion. (…) There cannot be a just society until there is a society; and the adjective just doesn't determine, it only modifies, the substantive life of the societies it describes. (1983:312-13)

Any concept and value, being determined by the particular system in which it makes sense, implies relativism: in this case cultural and moral relativism. In its simplest form, relativism is the opposite of uniformity, but in the sense I use it here is more as contextual or situational, historical if you prefer. Most of the time, cultural relativism is defined indirectly, as keeping in mind the consequences it seems to

imply. Therefore, cultural relativism is believed to be the same as incommensurability of values or something lacking uniformity or neutrality. In the case of communitarianism, cultural relativism means that '…standard schedules of rights might apply differently in one cultural context than they do in another, that their application might have to take account of different collective goals,' (Taylor, 1994:52) This possibility opens another series of important problems. One thing is evident, for most liberals, cultural relativism, understood as incommensurability, is as an undesirable option.

In more detail, communitarian multiculturalism rejects one basic notion of classical liberalism: *the idea that a liberal society is the one that remains neutral on particular ideas of a good life.*[42] This idea is foundational for civic societies in general. As I described in Chapter 3, this is the base for political pluralism in modern nations. Only if the state and its institutions keep themselves neutral can they mediate between the different interests of individuals and groups. However, communitarians do not see any contradiction between supporting liberal values and a particular good, as in Québec. 'On their view, a society can be organized around a definition of the good life, without this being seen as a depreciation of those who do not personally share this definition.' (Taylor, 1994:59) What makes society liberal is not its neutrality, but the commitment to respect diversity, especially of those who do not share the collective goals. *The fundamental rights* enabling the communitarian liberal society are those that fulfil the conditions to respect diversity. In contrast to these *fundamental rights* that secure the respect to diversity despite a fixed collective goal, there are privileges and immunities of uniform treatment, which make difference inhospitable (Taylor, 1994).

Communitarian multiculturalism endorses a form of cultural relativism and, at the same time, it is a form of liberalism. As Taylor affirms, it is a form of liberalism that is hospitable to difference, which does not support the uniform application of

[42] Taylor draws on Dworkin's distinction between liberalism and goods to build his argument and refute it. Dworkin says: 'I do not suppose that I have made liberalism more attractive by arguing that its constitutive morality is a theory of equality that requires official neutrality amongst theories of what is valuable in life. (…) Liberalism cannot be based on scepticism. Its constitutive morality provides that human beings must be treated as equals by their government, not because there is no right and wrong in political morality, but because that is what is right. Liberalism does not rest on any special theory of personality, nor does it deny that most human beings will think that what is good for them is that they be active in society. Liberalism is not self-contradictory: the liberal conception of equality is a principle of political organization that is required by justice, not a way of life for individuals, and liberals, as such, are indifferent as to whether people choose to speak out on political matters, or to lead eccentric lives, or otherwise to behave as liberals are supposed to prefer.' (Dworkin,

rights; it is a form of liberalism that takes into account communities' cultural context and the collective goals. In more technical terms, communitarian multiculturalism is not a form of procedural liberalism.[43] In other words, communitarian multiculturalism questions the assumption of neutrality of classical liberalism. In the case of LMC, western democracies should secure the survival of minority cultures because their members need the societal culture to choose if they want to keep in that particular group or if they move away from it. In that case it is just a kind of background that functions as a context of choice. With respect to communitarian multiculturalism, there is a particular good fostered by the collective goals to secure the survival of the culture, but they equally respect the diversity of those who disagree with such goods and goals.

If we see it from the outcome, we have two theories that support group-differentiated rights, that allow individuals to dissent and chose, but that one openly and the other tacitly fosters a particular culture. In these cases, the particular minorities do not need even to be considered to construct a picture of diversity and plurality, all we need are the liberal communities and to analyse how they understand, support and deal with diversity. From these liberal perspectives, diversity is all about how the majority culture or the liberal community deal *within themselves* to accept, reject, integrate or whatever perspective they have towards the other! The second wind of multiculturalism, which I describe in the next section brings a little hope to this liberal self-absorption.

There is another fundamental feature of communitarian multiculturalism that I will save for future chapters. In order to avoid pointless repetitions, I very briefly mention the fundamentals of communitarian dialogue. I critically present this notion in Chapters 6 and 7. For communitarian multiculturalists, especially Taylor, dialogue is important because that is the way identities are formed. Therefore, there are significant others that are more important than being part of the otherness we deal with on daily basis: they are essential for our own formation and self-understanding. 'My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.' (1994:34)

However, before delving deeper into the criticism of communitarian

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1978:142-43)

[43] Bell affirms: 'For the communitarian critique of liberal universalism to have any lasting credibility, thinkers need to provide compelling counter-examples to modern-day liberal-democratic regimes and 1980s communitarians came up short.' (2016) I think that communitarianism achieves this by differentiating between procedural and other forms of liberalism. In other words, the metapolitical level of due process has no primacy over the legitimate political ends.

multiculturalism in the next chapter, we can advance some ideas to keep in mind. There is an unbalance between the critique communitarian multiculturalism is capable of building and its own proposal. Communitarianism, in general, can elaborate accurate and strong critiques on the universalist and neutral aims of liberal theory, but they fall a little bit short of developing concrete proposals. At least Taylor overemphasises the case of Québec, but as I will argue in Chapter 7 there are several problems derived from this particular case of being a minority in respect of Anglophone Canada and a majority regarding the minorities within the province. Communitarian multiculturalism is important at a theoretical level, but it has not been reflected in policies. In that respect, liberal multiculturalism is more relevant.

4.5 The second wind of multiculturalism

Even if the other two main figures in the multicultural theory are also philosophers –Kymlicka and Taylor-, Parekh had the merit to bring back an important part of the debate to the ground of philosophy. Parekh's approach represents a reinvigorated second wind.[44] His place and time in the development of the multicultural theory were different from Kymlicka and Taylor's in that he dealt with a socio-political project firmly established, at least theoretically, and that had already translated some of its ideas into policies and rights in a good number of countries.[45] At the time he published his major work on multiculturalism, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000), the debate was already taking place on different levels, but there was not, *sensu stricto*, enough philosophical self-criticism dealing systematically with the deepest assumptions of the theory.

Influenced by Michael Oakeshott's thought, Parekh's effort focus on analysing and minimising the presuppositions of the current multicultural theories. *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000) introduced a reinvigorated approach to projects of diversity and plurality, advocating the idea of intercultural debate and cultural diversity as something valuable, but within a framework that does not overvalue liberalism. However, despite drawing on different traditions and his incisive criticism of liberalism, this enterprise showed itself harder than it seems. Parekh's multiculturalism is liberal in the sense that it keeps some of its assumptions, but not

[44] It is not exactly new multiculturalism as Vertovec (2001a) called it.

[45] Varun Uberoi (2015) tracks some issues of minority nationalism and mass immigration in Parekh's work to the 70s, however, the substantial work on multiculturalism, *Rethinking*

because his criticism is inaccurate or invalid. If we start from the end and go directly to his proposal, at least in the case of Britain, Parekh refers to the necessity of being a community of communities, which in his opinion implies moving from being a multicultural society to a multiculturalist one. 'The state need not consist of a single people and could be a community of communities, each enjoying different degrees of autonomy but all held together by shared legal and political bonds.' (Parekh, 2000:194) In other words, a society where cultural difference is valued and welcomed.

However, Parekh's approach is not so different from Kymlicka and Taylor's multiculturalism. In a generous reading, all go beyond the simple purpose of securing formal recognition of minority groups and try to value and welcome difference. In other words, they are confident that a multicultural society gradually becomes a multiculturalist one. Kymlicka believes that the acceptance of cultural difference brought by multiculturalism is something that must be visible in the identity of citizens,[46] and Taylor promotes recognition as something embedded in the inner-self of individuals.[47] The particularity of Parekh's conception is that he approaches the political institutions in a different way, which is characterised by the focus on their cultural constitution. Institutions are not neutral but culturally shaped. Therefore, he debunks the ideal of neutral institutions at the core of liberalism. He believes that the constitution of the state's political institutions is negotiated between cultural communities.

> [Culture] influences major social institutions in several ways. The manner in which a society organizes its economic and political life depends on how it defines, legitimizes and regulates, and what meaning and significance it assigns to, the pursuit of wealth and the exercise of power, respectively. (Parekh, 2000:151)

The ethical principles embedded in the institutions derive from the moral practices and not necessarily from some principles of reason. There is not a plurality of practices as a result of the plurality of values in different societies, at least no

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Multiculturalism (2000), comes after Kymlicka and Taylor's.

[46] When national identity is multicultural 'by definition' then it does become a multiculturalism community. He says: 'But in Canada, which has officially defined itself as a multicultural nation, multiculturalism serves as a source of shared national identity and pride for native-born citizens and immigrants alike. Studies show that in the absence of multiculturalism, national identity is more likely to lead to intolerance and xenophobia. Indeed, Canada may be the only Western country where strength of national identity is positively correlated with support for immigration, a finding that is difficult to explain except by reference to multiculturalism.' (Kymlicka, 2012b:10-11)

[47] 'Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need.' (Taylor, 1994:26)

more than there is a plurality of values as a result of different practices. In other words, there is a tight relation between practices and morality; there is a plural nature of what is good according to different communities and then the institutions are shaped by this different idea of what is good. In other words, they are not neutral. 'A morally and culturally neutral state which makes no moral demands on its citizens and is equally hospitable to all cultures and conceptions of the good is logically impossible.' (Parekh, 2000:201-2) In a slightly different way than Taylor, Parekh shows that 'Liberalism is also a fighting creed.' (Taylor, 1994:62) Liberalism is just another cultural practice.

The liberal way to organise diversity is just one in a collection of possibilities. Having said that, Parekh goes further and affirms that even if the liberal practices were the closest we can get to universal norms of inclusion, there is no formal reason to choose them over the norms of any other community. This idea separates his approach from previous multicultural theorists. Kymlicka openly addresses liberalism as the main way to address issues of diversity and plurality; Taylor believes that 'liberalism 2' is a plausible way to deal with plurality and recognition, especially considering that being liberal in this new sense means respecting diversity. Parekh pushes it further, liberalism is just one amongst the other forms to deal with diversity issues. Still more, inspired by the communitarian objection to moral universalism, Parekh points out that any abstract moral principle has to be actualised in a concrete form, and there is no interpretation that can claim to be better than other. In other words, he unveils the monism behind the liberal tradition.

Parekh draws on two ideas as conditions to achieve the community of communities he proposes: 1) to deny liberal universalism and along with it its dominant position in cultural interactions, and 2) to engage in intercultural dialogue. Parekh's explanation of the origin of liberal universalism affirms that liberalism tends to assume moral monist presuppositions. The monist basic presupposition asserts there is only one way of life that is truly human. There are important consequences of the moral monist perspective: it fosters a judgemental approach to other ways of life, considers differences as deviations, prevents contact to what is outside the assumed way of life and seeks to peacefully or violently assimilate those other forms of life. This last consequence is particularly important because it unveils the link with liberal societies.

> Christians, liberals and Marxists favoured the second approach [assimilation] because they thought that the divinely revealed or rationally excogitated truths were within the moral reach of all. The ease with which

> these and other groups have justified or condoned egregious violence against alternative ways of life, often in the name of human equality and universal love, should alert us to the dangers of all forms of monism. (Parekh, 2000:49)

As Parekh explains, even if it tends to seem neutral and objective, the liberal understanding of its own way of life shapes the idea of human nature that is supposed to objectively represent.

> Take their account of autonomy. As they understand it, culture helps individuals develop their capacity for autonomy, which then transcends it and views it and the wider world untainted by its provenance. This is a misleading account of the relation between the two. (…) Far from being purely formal and culturally neutral, their capacity for autonomy is structured in a particular way, functions within flexible but determinate limits, and defines and assesses options in certain ways. (Parekh, 2000:110)

In other words, the understanding that any culture has of its own and other ways of life as a representative of any human nature is culturally and socially shaped. We can indeed question the idea of human nature[48] as something that maybe has no real referent. But even if there is such a thing as 'human nature', Parekh's argument is strong enough to strike at the foundations of liberal pluralism. On the other hand, in his attempt to deny universalism, Parekh thinks he is able to dodge also its opposite: relativism. In his opinion, both imply essentialist conceptions of culture. However, in this last part some liberal assumptions or ideas close to liberal assumptions might sneak into his argument. He says:

> Relativism ignores the cross-culturally shared human properties and is mistaken in its beliefs that a culture is a tightly integrated and self-contained whole, can be neatly individuated, and determines its members. Monism rests on an untenably substantive view of human nature, ignores the impossibility of deriving moral values from human nature alone, fails to appreciate its cultural mediation and reconstitution, and so on. (Parekh, 2000:127)

More important than the certitude that only within the same culture we can justify beliefs and practices is the fact that it is impossible to delegitimise the beliefs and practices of others. On one hand, multiculturalism should avoid privileging the liberal ideals of social justice over other different conceptions of justice, but on the other, it should find some norms of inclusion that are not completely arbitrary. Now, this apparent impasse is not a reason for different cultures to avoid interaction. There is a solution according to Parekh, a perspective that escapes the essentialism of monism and relativism: 'It would seem that a dialectical and pluralist form of minimum universalism offers the most coherent response to moral and cultural

[48] Parekh does believe in a human nature and defines it as all those features that are not

diversity.' (Parekh, 2000:127) This approach leads the argument to the idea of intercultural dialogue.

The aim of intercultural dialogue is to find a balance. Initially, people should be willing to learn about their culture to the point at which they feel confident enough to openly try to learn from other cultures. In order to secure intercultural dialogue, multiculturalist societies need a political structure that simultaneously legitimises differences and fosters unity. In a continuous process, first, legitimating difference would provide the base for an attitude of openness, then, a strong unity would erase the fear of otherness. Perhaps the first part of legitimating difference is not as problematic as the second: securing unity. Here Parekh's argument again inches closer to liberal stands, including the notion of minimum universalism. In any case, if this dialectical tension is possible, then we would be moving from multi*cultural* societies to multi*culturalist* ones.

Parekh believes that the unity of modern multiculturalist societies must rely on two pillars: equal treatment and national identity. Equal treatment should not be understood as a sort of uniformity, but as differentiated legal and political requirements that reflect the diversity of cultures, in terms of the most classical multicultural theory, equal treatment is close to the idea of group-differentiated rights. Similarly to Kymlicka's stance and his effort to show how group-differentiated rights are compatible with liberalism, Parekh would affirm they do not threaten social unity, but foster it, even outside the framework of liberalism. The liberal assumption of the State as a constitutional community presupposed a sort of imaginary homogeneity. Although homogeneity must not be the condition for unity, completely the opposite, the state need not consist in a single people, but a community of communities, that means that there is no need of a unitarian system of authority. (Parekh, 2000:194)

It is clear that Parekh tries to find common ground between minorities and majorities and, as a consequence, he focuses his efforts on political institutions. Again, like other liberal multiculturalists, Parekh has faith in institutions. Unfortunately, political institutions are not placed under the microscope as other parts of multicultural theory are. A more radical criticism of the liberal structure and its institutions, like that developed by CRT, would unveil what happens when institutions have the mission to foster the unity amongst citizens.

Parekh knows that the multicultural integration that he proposes has to

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derived from the social world and that belong to the species. (Parekh, 2000)

address the problem of social unity. In order to achieve this, he introduces the idea of Operative Public Values (OPVs) (2000:267). These values are defined as those without which it is impossible to achieve any sort of social cohesion; they are the public moral and political rules that bind together a group into a larger society. The OPVs have no authority beyond the fact they are part of current social relations, therefore, their authority is limited to their acceptance and acknowledgement in a community. OPVs are not the structures or goals of particular communities, that is, values, but just terms of common practices. With this definition, Parekh leaves the door open to incorporate and explain change into the practices; also, he clearly brings back the cultural dialogue to the heart of politics. In accordance with Parekh, doing politics is engaged in the dialogue between different parts, in this case, between different cultural communities. If OPVs are at the same time the glue of social cohesion and they allow the change of practices, it is understandable why they become the basis for the intercultural dialogue proposed by Parekh.

OPVs are the means to negotiate multicultural inclusion. 'Since the operative public values represent the shared moral structure of society's public life, they provide the only widely acceptable starting point for a debate on minority practices.' (Parekh, 2000:270) For instance, Parekh believes that when a minority claims recognition within the wider society, minorities and majorities assert their respective OPVs, then through dialogue, a reasoned process of revision takes place. Minorities often try to defend their practices and the majorities question why those practices offend them. In the dialogical process, *ideally*, both sides would learn from each other. The political negotiation advocated by Parekh is no different from classical politics since Aristotle; the negotiation through OPVs becomes political persuasion. Parekh is able to dodge the naive perception of institutions as neutral but some problems are also visible in this idea of politics, particularly the assumption of negotiation as a rational dialogue, which I develop further in Chapters 6 and 7. This trust in dialogue and negotiation place his stands a little bit closer to the liberal structure of western societies. Using CRT, Chapter 2 argued how reformist and mild approaches leave structural issues untouched. On the other hand, Parekh introduces a change in the politics, in that not the values or the ideas, but the practices are always the beginning of any negotiation and are always open to interpretation.

After describing the three main forms of multiculturalism I can delineate three important concepts where all converge: the need for social unity, the usefulness of

national identity and the translation of the multicultural aims into a form of multicultural nationalism.

4.6 Social cohesion and national identity: towards an idea of multicultural nationalism

The incorporation of any of the three subjects of multicultural theory -national minorities, ethnic groups and indigenous peoples- into mainstream society depends on the way collective identity is understood, particularly, national and cultural identity. Modern, western societies, including multicultural ones, share the assumption that no state can exist if its members do not feel linked to the larger community, if the members do not develop a strong collective identity that expresses their belonging. (Miller, 1995, 2000; Tamir, 1993) The idea behind this assumption is simple: groups are formed from individuals and they would disappear if those individuals cease to identify with them, in the opposite case, the closer the identification with the features of a group, the stronger the glue that holds the parts together. The same train of thought can be extended beyond individuals and it also works for collectivities within larger groups.

If national minorities, immigrants or indigenous peoples do not feel linked to the state, serious issues would arise for the cohesion, unity and, consequently, the stability of the larger community. Consequentially, national and/or cultural identity are terms used to refer to the conditions for communities' social cohesion. 'The shared view of national identity has a particularly important role in a multicultural society because of its greater need to cultivate a common sense of belonging among its diverse communities.' (Parekh, 2000:231) Even if we cannot affirm that social cohesion and collective identity are equivalent in all circumstances, it is clear that identity has been a predominant idea to explain the social unity of modern states. 'In macro-level studies, the search for the national character has been one of the leitmotifs from the beginning, long before the term identity, was even coined. (…) In general, emotional attachment to a collective identity is what makes members loyal to a group.' (Ehala, 2017:5&13)

Identity and unity are key concepts for those seeking to explain the reasons why and ways members of a community come and remain together. Taking this into consideration, what I argue here is that *the social glue in a multicultural state is not essentially different from that in a 'plain' nation-state, at least the conditions and the*

aims are not different. In this respect, both theories are aligned. In Chapter 3 I described how civic nations are built on the basis of a shared identity. Therefore, some of the same issues faced by the nationalism theories in explaining the social cohesion of a community are present in multiculturalism. The multicultural project does not move beyond these limits without acknowledging and proposing alternative ways of analysing social cohesion.

Let me draw the simplest schematic of the relationship between individual understandings of human nature used in liberal theories and the quest for social cohesion. In order to defend the possibility of multicultural states within the framework of western, modern societies, they must provide all the conditions for individuals and groups that make life within a society worthwhile. Otherwise, the members of the communities could not find enough reasons to belong to the larger state. This notion corresponds in its purest form to the main issue unveiled by social contract theory. As political philosophers argued, especially Rousseau (1950:I), if the members of a community remain united they do not do so naturally, but voluntarily. In other words, they are not going to give up their natural liberty without getting something in return. The gap between 'voluntary' integration to a group -or at least non-natural integration- and the conditions for making it worthwhile is considerable. Nevertheless, it seems to be widely accepted that failure to provide some basic benefits for the members of a community leads to social disintegration. Even if communitarians and the second wind of multiculturalism openly criticise the idea of a social contract, they do need to find a way to secure social cohesion and in some bits, they retain contractarian assumptions.

What I want to emphasise now is the base on which multicultural theory is built upon and the directionality of the argument: nation-states foster social cohesion through the idea of a collective identity -national or civic-, and in turn collective identity requires the provision of some fundamental conditions to keep together an unnaturally bonded community that otherwise might disaggregate. From this base, theories on what those fundamental conditions must be and how securing them would lead to justice and equality have taken many forms. Predominantly the liberal tradition has focused on these conditions, from John Rawls's theory of justice (1999 [1971]) to Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach (2000, 2011), but also a more communitarian view takes the same foundation for its development, from Michael Walzer (1983) to Charles Taylor's irreducibly social goods (1995).

The aims and key concepts of multiculturalism express the fundamental

claim of developing and respecting national and ethnic identities of minorities, thereby responding to the requirement implied in the contractual assumption: the need to foster the bond amongst members and strengthen social unity. In other words, the assumption inherited from the contractual argument for social unity is present in the multicultural theory as a problem to solve. However, the answer is not so different to civic nationalism, only expanding it. A right to express membership to national or/and ethnic minorities and *all that goes with it* becomes a basic condition for bonding to the state. The right of any particular group or individual to express membership would result in a stronger and more cohesive larger society. For instance, 'Members of immigrant minorities will be more likely to identify with a new national identity if they feel their ethnic identity is publicly respected.' (Kymlicka, 2012b:12)

Summarising, states could only gather members of different national and ethnic groups, and achieve social unity, if they allow them to develop at the same time and within some limits their own national identity or ethnic particularity. Therefore, social unity confines the possible outcomes of the multicultural project; the idea that modern, liberal societies need a form of glue imposes a limit on multicultural theory. In regard to this issue, multicultural societies are built on the basis of nation-state models. Multicultural projects might develop some internal debate on the identification of the conditions that lead different minorities to want to be part of the 'host' state, and the circumstances for the larger community to positively incorporate the minorities, as well as their limits, but the model is the same.

Different notions come into play in the attempt to delineate the formal and practical conditions for developing a collective identity and, consequently, social cohesion. The diversity of notions increases the complexity of the argumentation. Nation, culture, people and ethnic groups are defined in terms of each other. Nonetheless, they are not exactly interchangeable. Some national communities might be the 'natural' evolution of particular ethnic groups, as ethnic nationalism affirms, but not all the national groups are made by one particular ethnic community, as civic nationalism describes. Every nation fosters a culture, the same for every ethnic group and indigenous people, for this reason, supporting rights of membership to any of these groups is to advocate a culture. Nation, people, ethnic group and indigenous people are not the same although they partially coincide. As said before, they frequently overlap. It is not a minor problem that they can be

different and at the same time all of them foster their own culture that quite often conflates ingredients of the others, nor is it a minor issue when we realise that the idea of collective identity replicates this. Multiculturalism has not just inherited a conceptual framework from the theories of nation-states and the contractarian tradition, but also some of its most important issues and, of course, limits.

4.7 Multicultural nationalism

I have argued that despite important differences the main figures of multicultural theory -Kymlicka, Taylor and Parekh- support some liberal views. They also share a similar conception of civic nations and, in consequence, they advocate national and cultural identity. All these shared features lead them to push slightly different versions of multicultural nationalism, that is, the idea that national identity is the key to providing the social glue needed for keeping together the different groups.

The notion of multicultural nationalism might '…seem counterintuitive. After all, multiculturalism (as an embrace of diversity) and nationalism (as a quest for unity and identity) are often depicted as contradictory ideas,' (Kernerman, 2005:5) Yet, if we look closer, multiculturalism aims to protect the cultural identity of national minorities, it can be broadly considered a pro-nationalist stand. But then again, some may argue that it cannot be entirely identified as a form of nationalism because national minorities are only one possible beneficiary of group-differentiated rights, along with indigenous peoples and immigrants. Even if we pay attention exclusively to the type of multiculturalism corresponding to multinationalism, putting aside for a moment indigenous peoples and polyethnic forms,'…a "multinational nationalist" movement is certainly an oxymoron; and a "multicultural nationalist" movement comes very close to being one.' (Hussain & Miller, 2006:3) In principle, nationalist movements, along with the larger states hosting them, might claim the rights of self-determination and sovereignty, which seem in many respects to lead to fundamental incompatibilities and to distrust the idea of a possible multinational state. The situation is indeed complex. Several clarifications are needed, but there is one way in which we can affirm multiculturalism is indeed a form of nationalism. I try to describe this way in the next paragraphs.

To shed light on the way I am claiming multiculturalism is a form of nationalism, it is useful to clarify: I am not asserting there is one or more *de facto* multicultural nation or multicultural state, even when I strongly believe it. In contrast,

I am saying that, *if any liberal multicultural society exists they necessarily do so within the limits of the conceptual framework of civic nationalism*. Essentially, multiculturalism is a project pursuing unity of the larger group, which is always a nation or a state. In other words, for better or worse, the multicultural theory does not in any significant way contest the legitimacy of the modern state and its organisation. Attending to the way multiculturalism develops its theoretical features, especially the idea of what collective identity a multicultural state should achieve, we can say it corresponds to the general form of civic nationalism. The kind of citizenship fostered by multiculturalism is built around the concept of national identity; pursuing accommodation of minorities in multicultural societies leads to a boost for the national identity of the larger society (Kymlicka, 1995). Or maybe, to say it properly, any sort of accommodation is determined by the goal of developing a strong national identity.

There is a wide and fascinating body of literature, not entirely free of controversy, on different instances of multicultural nationalism, including the cases of Quebec and Canada (Kernerman, 2005), Scotland and Britain (Bond, 2017; Bond & Rosie, 2002; Hussain & Miller, 2006; Maxwell, 2006), Catalonia and Spain (MacInnes, 2006; Moreno, 2001), and Swiss federalism (Dardanelli & Stojanovia, 2011; Reinhardt, 2011). However, I am not addressing this debate on the factual accommodation of national minorities or immigrants within larger societies, I do not try to demonstrate the success or failure of any form of multicultural nationalism, just its conceptual limits. I do not even try to move beyond the categories of *multinational* and *mononational*, as scholars such as Nenad Stojanovic (2011) or Michael Keating (2001) might invite us to do. I focus instead on the criteria on which *all* these empirical studies contrast their findings: the existence of a strong national identification to the larger group amongst the members of the minorities and the liberalisation of the mainstream society. Both lead, according to the modern liberal perspective, to trust in our fellow citizens.

Claims for recognition made during the last decades by some national minorities shaped the way the whole multicultural project was understood. ‘New’ liberal nationalist movements, like the Québécois, set the model for national minorities to push cultural claims in the framework of western democracies. Quebec’s nationalism demonstrated that collective goals can be liberal and are capable of respecting fundamental rights (Taylor, 1994:59). The case of Quebec actually triggered conceptual developments in important theories as in the case of

Kymlicka, who affirms '…my account of societal culture was intended to explain and evaluate the claims of sub-state national groups like the Québécois to autonomy and official language rights. In my view, the case of Québécois nationalism clearly exemplifies the goals of LMC.' (2015:222).

Particularly Charles Taylor (1993) and Will Kymlicka (1995) often refer to Quebec's nationalism in their argumentations, not just because they are Canadian, but because it is an important instance of how nationalist claims can be compatible with liberal principles of civil rights and equality. Even Bhikhu Parekh spent some time analysing the case of Quebec (1994, 2000). Very quickly other instances, such as Catalonia, Scotland and Switzerland, expanded the set of liberal nationalist and multinationalist movements analysed by multicultural theory. The emphasis on Canada, Australia, Britain or Switzerland is undeniable, and the empirical evidence is always important in any possible theory. Nevertheless, in this case, to know if any of these countries are in fact multinational does not help us in understanding the structural scope of the multicultural project, and it does not express the way in which I claim multiculturalism *is* a form of nationalism.

Multiculturalism is limited by the frame of nationalism because it retains the fundamental assumption that a strong collective identity is favourable to bringing together the members of a group: '…National identities are controversial when used to justify secession, dangerous when equated with race, but valuable when used to foster unity among citizens otherwise unknown to one another.' (Uberoi, 2015:75) In consequence, similarly to the theories of nationalism, multicultural theorists believe that a strong identification with the larger country becomes an important way to share a sentiment leading to social cohesion. Like any state, multicultural states develop their own collective identity, which breaks through the different groups forming it and at the same time fosters the particular identities of smaller communities. In fact,

> …if there is a viable way to promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose in a multination state, it will involve accommodating, rather than subordinating, national identities. People from different national groups will only share an allegiance to the larger polity if they see it as the context within which their national identity is nurtured, rather than subordinated. (Kymlicka, 1995:189)

From the perspective of multicultural theory, the political recognition of minority groups is fully compatible with the general form of civic nationalism, and it must be framed considering the obligation to identify with the larger state. From the other side, the relation is also possible, but more complex; despite the fact that most

accounts of nationalism would not deny that strong national identities lead to more cohesive societies, not every form of nationalism is compatible with the binary identity implied by the multicultural project. From the perspective of some theories on nationalism, the political recognition of minorities does not necessarily contribute to a stronger national identity for the larger polity. On the contrary, it might lead to a more fragmented society and to weaker bonds between different groups, which is an argument against multiculturalism endorsed by different perspectives. Nationalists, conservatives, liberals, cosmopolitanists, and transnationalists, amongst others, have subscribed to variations of this criticism (Kymlicka, 2015). A strong attachment to the culture, ethnicity and/or religion of the minority group might prevent individuals from embracing the identity of the larger society, and this becomes a key issue to deal with for the multicultural project.

It is only some theoretical frameworks, those with a particular understanding of social cohesion, which accept the idea that members of a community can, *simultaneously*, develop a bond with a minority group and the larger polity. Even more, only a certain kind of nationalism would accept that providing room for the identity of minorities is a condition to secure the unity of the larger society, which is by far a more ambitious claim made by multiculturalism. This form of *multicultural nationalism* exists only at the intersection of different features that traditionally have formed the typology of nationalism; it partially overlaps features of civic, liberal, voluntaristic and cultural nationalism. It is close to what Miscevic would name *sophisticated pro-nationalism* (2014), represented by scholars such as David Miller (1995) and Yael Tamir (1993). Sophisticated pro-nationalists would agree that a strong overarching national identity is needed to spread solidarity amongst the different groups, but, at the same time, this identity should be inclusive in order to fulfil the liberal aims of social justice.

> Cultural differences do create barriers to trust – there is no question about that – but given the right pattern of interaction these barriers can be overcome. (…) One way to tackle this problem might be to look for connections at the individual level between sense of national identity, generalised trust in one's fellow citizens and willingness to support socially just policies.' (Miller, 2013:90-91)

Multiculturalism is compatible with forms of liberal nationalism (Johnston et al., 2010; Kymlicka, 1995; Uberoi, 2008). They share fundamental principles and the same structure. Multicultural nationalism is in the first instance a liberal form of nationalism because it is grounded in the canonical liberal values of freedom, equality and democracy, and it does not wish to give them up under any

circumstance. Those who argue that multicultural policies are possible without eroding core liberal-democratic values, which we can name *the liberal multicultural hypothesis* (Kymlicka, 2010:258), are accepting the traditional framework of civic national-states. The idea that the inclusion of minority groups becomes part of the national identity for the larger society denotes the civic component of this form of nationalism[49], especially because it emphasises the fact that the features of national identity derive from liberal practices and values.

As mentioned above, according to the typology of nationalism, the civic idea of a nation tends to draw attention in the common political ground and the ideology behind it, acknowledging these as the glue for the group. In other words, what brings together the different groups within a multinational state corresponds to a shared civic culture, the liberal civic culture to be more specific. Multicultural nationalism also satisfies the tendency to place the community of identity in laws and institutions, which is another hallmark of civic forms of nationalism. 'The identity of a political community lies in what all its members share not individually but collectively, not privately but publicly, and has an inescapable institutional focus.' (Parekh, 1994:502) Additionally, if the community is built on political ground, then the institutions are in charge of recognising and accommodating the identity and practice in the larger state. They are actually in charge of defining and spreading the idea of what national identity is in any case:

> Politicians and officials thus use the state to suggest what history, homeland, public culture and so on members of the nation share and in doing so they shape the summary of what members of the nation share that a national identity offers. (Uberoi, 2008:408)

The particularities of the recognition and accommodation are a matter of debate, but the proposals are limited by the necessity to go through institutional instances; if federalism is the best system of government for the multicultural states or what particular multicultural policies should be supported are concerns beyond my purpose in this text. For what matters now, following Smith's definition (1991:11), five out of five attributes of standard civic-liberal nationalism are included and discussed in the multicultural theory: historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality, and common civic culture and ideology. In regard to other

[49] Assertions highlighting the ideological content of national identity are always open to discussion. But then again, what matters for my argumentation here is not exactly if these claims are the case; when Kymlicka repeatedly says that 'Canadians view immigrants and demographic diversity as key parts of their own Canadian identity.' (2010:273), the significant part for our purposes is that this is what every multicultural nationalism aims towards.

features I have emphasised in my brief account of the typology of nationalism, I have to say that the identification is not so immediate; multicultural nationalism is also realist, voluntaristic and *cultural*, but for these features, some further clarification is needed.

4.8 The civic features of multicultural nationalism

In order to see in more detail how multicultural nationalism follows the same pattern of civic nationalism, we have to contrast it with the features mentioned in Chapter 3 for civic forms of nationalism: realist, voluntarist, and cultural. As we will see next, the arguments to describe how multicultural nationalism is realist and voluntarist complement each other. Multicultural nationalism is realist because it agrees that, despite the fact that national identities are constructed, the political ties in that social construction are real. They respond to particular historical, economic, political and even geographical conditions, and are not only a product of an ideological image of what is shared amongst the members of the community. National identities are not natural, there is no fixed substance behind them, instead, they are historically constructed. However, they are also historically constrained. In other words, even if it is a construction, national identity is not strictly a matter of collective choice, on the contrary, it embodies a sort of continuity through history that emphasises the past in the present.

In Chapter 3, I mentioned the *ad hoc* nature of national identity. This feature denotes that the particularities of each community should be taken into account in a realist manner. However, there is also a general aim of national identity that transcends the particularities: fostering solidarity beyond the limited interaction that the members of a community can actually develop. In other words, national identity does not just preserve the social cohesion within a specific community but also helps to extend it.

> …nationality answers one of the most pressing needs of the modern world, namely how to maintain solidarity among the populations of states that are large and anonymous, such that their citizens cannot possibly enjoy the kind of community that relies on kinship or face-to-face interaction.' (Miller, 1993:9)

The assertion that multicultural nationalism is voluntarist has two parts closely connected to the realist nature of national identity. First, the fact that civic national identity is a social construction lets us affirm it is voluntary in the broader

sense of the term, that is, it is not natural. Second, national identity's continuity through history denotes that it is shaped by notions of inherited ways of life.

> The past is not a passive storehouse of material from which each generation chooses whatever it likes for the reconstruction of its national identity. (…) A coherent view of national identity must grow out of a constant dialogue between the past and the present.' (Parekh, 1994:504).

To say it properly, multicultural nationalism is moderated-voluntarist, or if preferred realist-voluntarist. In this sense, it is far from radical civic nationalisms like the one defended by Ignatieff (1993) or Habermas' constitutional patriotism, even from Gellner's idea of nationalism as a political principle. Without going further, we can say it seems like a new variant of civic nationalism that tries to combine two important characteristics the reality of the circumstances shaping the groups and their ability to build an identity from them. Civic nations are indeed groups of people capable of organising themselves in a common political framework, just like its voluntarist quality dictates, however, this capability of organising has historical requirements, including cultural ones.

In a certain way, this moderated-voluntarist nationalism tries to avoid the two myths on which nations have traditionally justified, or if preferred, it mixes them. The myth of the ethnic nation suggests that we do not have a choice in making of our national identity, it is completely determined by factors outside our intervention; the myth of the civic nation suggest that our national identity is nothing but a matter of choice. In the ethnic nation, members are together because they belong to the same ethnicity, religion or cultural group; in the civic nation, the members of the society are together because they are like-minded. However, neither of these answers alone seems enough. A realist-voluntarist stand on this matter seems more plausible and better describes the issue's nuances. National identity, as the core of civic nationalism, seems to allow and demand a constant reaffirmation from each member of the community, denoting that it is essentially a matter of choice, but the object of the reaffirmation is not necessarily a matter of choice.

> A nation is, therefore, large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation's existence is if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life. (Renan, 1990:19)

The third feature is the cultural aspect. Multicultural nationalism clearly moves forward in emphasising the cultural features already present in crafting a

civic nation. The idea that the membership of a nation is based on allegiance to political principles, which is backed by any form of liberal nationalism should not be misunderstood as a lack of cultural elements, this is an achievement of cultural nationalism.

> The point is that all nationalisms have a cultural and historical component. Of course, the way culture and history is interpreted varies from nation to nation. Some nations define their culture in racial and religious terms, others do not. These variations are crucial to understanding why some nationalisms are xenophobic, authoritarian and expansionist, while others peaceful, liberal, and democratic. (Kymlicka, 2001c:247)

Multiculturalism proposes a solution that does not disrupt radically the established balance: including cultural recognition in the list of primary goods, which are *sine qua non* for a good life. In that way, 'This requirement of political recognition of cultural particularity —extended to all individuals— is compatible with a form of universalism that counts the culture and cultural context valued by individuals as among their basic interests.' (Gutmann, 1994:5) A significant amount of theoretical work was developed to justify the idea that every traditional culture has the value of a primary good. For instance, Taylor develops a thoughtful reflection to show that culture is not only instrumentally valuable, but it must be considered an irreducibly social good (1995), for that purpose he deeply criticises the fundamental assumption of the utilitarian theory. In the same direction, O'Neill (1999:224) and Song (2017) claim that Kymlicka's multicultural theory could be understood as an attempt to consider culture as a primary good in the sense of Rawls' theory of justice. In other words, a good which people need, no matter their particular way of life, because without it there would not be a context to make meaningful choices. If culture is indeed a primary good, it immediately reached the status of a thing that every rational person is presumed to want and which is necessary for pursuing personal goals, like Rawls defines it (1999 [1971]:62).

This is a good moment to recapitulate. *Multiculturalism, as a response to minorities demanding recognition of their identities, is only able to provide the room for that recognition, not the recognition itself.* In that respect, it falls short. Second, this is a limit that has inherited from a robust tradition of liberal nationalism, its form of organising society, and from the role and attributes it provides to the state. These inherited features lead to an important methodological problem: there is no point to maintain these assumptions and at the same time keep asking multiculturalism for something that is beyond its scope. Multiculturalism is not able to provide direct recognition to minority cultures, which does not mean that it is not meaningful, just

sometimes it is not enough.

Finally, we briefly analyse this description of multicultural nationalism in at least one important case, so we can perceive some issues with the theory. According to scholars like Kymlicka, Quebec is emblematic of multicultural nationalism because it brings together the aims of consolidating their societal culture and also liberalising and democratising its society. And even if this is true, it seems that at some moment during this process things turned upside down. A fight for cultural recognition ended up again in a case where, putting aside for a moment all the positive consequences of it, *the political prevails over the cultural*. It is true that there is no reason why the political and the cultural cannot converge in the same nationalist movement, but in the big picture, Quebec's case became the perfect example of how cultural mobilisation is not necessarily opposed to liberal and democratic values, and not the perfect example of how a group of people claiming recognition should be valued for what they are, for their identity and basically for the content of their culture. This *reduction* of the cultural dimension to political tolerance is what limits recognition of minority groups in the scope of the multicultural theory. Perhaps Charles Taylor is a better example of how they try to push the limits of political recognition a little bit further but unluckily not enough. In regards to Quebec, he says that

> It is not just a matter of having the French language available for those who might choose it [which is what Kymlicka's societal culture would support]. (…) But it also involves making sure that there is a community of people here in the future that will want to avail itself of the opportunity to use the French language. Policies aimed at survival actively seek to create members of the community,…(1994:57-58)

Unfortunately, even if he is closer, there is still a gap between a full recognition of cultural claims and their survival. The survival of a culture is not the same as the full recognition that a community might demand. Keeping the Francophone culture alive is not the same as others valuing it as a valid and worthwhile form of life.

4.9 Conclusions

I presented a minimum definition of multiculturalism as an institutionally-oriented liberal perspective centred in group-differentiated rights. I also distinguished between three levels of analysis; I went further into the philosophical and political arguments. In this way we could see that behind multiculturalism there are traditions

of liberalism, the Enlightenment, contractarianism and modernity, which leads to the construction of the same idea of political plurality found in those approaches. I delineated the three main forms of multicultural theory: liberal, communitarian and the second wind of multiculturalism. I particularly tried to emphasise that each expanded the limits of the most traditional liberalism; the path goes from group-differentiated rights, to deny neutrality of the state, to finally dismiss other features of traditional liberalism. Finally, I portrayed the convergence of the three forms of multiculturalism in the idea of civic national identity, which addresses the problems of social cohesion and political plurality. I explained that the three forms support instances of multicultural nationalism. Unfortunately, this multicultural nationalism and its related political plurality is not enough for a strong form of identity and recognition. In the next chapter I develop further the criticism, so it is possible to more clearly perceive these limitations.

Chapter 5

The limits of multiculturalism

What follows is an account of some criticisms addressed to multicultural theory. Considering the diversity of perspectives and issues that can be criticised in multicultural theory, I follow the attempts of Will Kymlicka and Ralph Grillo to organise the criticism. Moreover, I point out that it is unusual to find critical evaluations of multicultural theory that *systematise* the problems and connect the different issues. Therefore, it is useful to build a more robust critique that consistently follows a train of thought. What I propose in this chapter is that such a dogged unification of these critiques will reveal the shared constraints faced by all forms of multiculturalism.

The chapter is divided into 6 sections before its Conclusion. The first one is devoted to situating the review outside the debate about the backlash against multiculturalism. It is very important to discuss why multiculturalism has not worked in the way some people expected, including advocates and critics. However, I propose that multiculturalism has fallen short not because it is an essentially flawed socio-political project but because its liberal and modern assumptions limit its reach. I propose a systematic approach, which means uniting the critics under one paradigm.

The next 5 sections follow the same train of thought and they move from the critique of essentialism to the way multiculturalism conceptualises the sources of inequality, discrimination and bigotry. In Section 2, I describe one of the most common criticisms directed at multiculturalism: essentialism. The critique claims multiculturalism is an essentialist approach because it reifies cultures and identities. Behind this claim there is a fear that the efforts at cultural preservation preclude individual agency. However, some sort of essentialisation is unavoidable. Liberal democracies also essentialise some of its subjects but this usually remains

unnoticed. Section 3 carries this last idea further, arguing liberal societies tend to essentialise their members in the search for social cohesion. This notion of societal unity determines what kind of diversity is fostered. This leads us to question, is collective identity possible without unity? Additionally, I explain how national identity is the royal road to social cohesion. Civic forms of identity were an attempt to avoid ethnic and racial essentialism. Unfortunately, they cannot help impose other conceptualisations of fellow citizens. In Section 4, I describe how the categorisation of culture, nation and people and their articulation set some limits on multiculturalism. I pay particular attention to the problems derived from defining culture in terms of shared language and history. Section 5 is devoted to showing how the majority-minority dichotomy is more about unbalanced power relations than proportions. In other words, it is not clear that a quantitative category reflects a qualitative issue. The conflicts between majorities and minorities are not only cultural but power struggles. Finally, in Section 6, I further investigate the reasons why multiculturalism conceptualises hierarchies and inequalities as an outcome of illiberal ideologies. Then I analyse its consequences: even if some part of the power relations can be framed as psychological dislike, or prejudice, the material side of power is equally important. At the end of this chapter, I will be able to affirm that, in the multicultural theory, *the Other* is only recognised in the process of integration, outside there is no recognition.

5.1 Moving from failure and backlash to systematic criticism.

The current debate on multiculturalism has centred around its supposed failure and backlash. Therefore, the main concern is that multicultural policies are not working as expected. The failure is usually explained as a mixture of theoretical and practical issues, including inconsistencies, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings. The criticism of the multicultural theory is itself very diverse in its nature and in how it is expressed. For instance, Daniel O'Neill (1999) argues that important multicultural scholars, including liberals -Kymlicka-, communitarians -Taylor- and conventionalists -Walzer-, are inconsistent in their theories when handling specific cases like Salman Rushdie's publication of *The Satanic Verses.*[50]

[50] The controversy refers to the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and the satire of Islam portrayed there. British Muslims campaigned to prevent its publication and eventually burnt copies in protest. Eventually, Ayatollah Khomeini declared the book in

Multicultural proposals like external protections, cultural relativism, or justice as relative to social meanings do not seem to find the expected congruency. The abstract theory supports special protections for vulnerable cultural minorities from the mainstream culture, but in paradigmatic instances like the Rushdie affair, they revert to universal and non-contextualised principles.

> I believe the difficulties stem from an unresolved (and perhaps unresolvable) tension at the heart of each thinker's attempt to synthesize strong multiculturalism and individual rights-based liberalism. The particular nature of this tension differs, given the different theoretical presuppositions underpinning the theories of Kymlicka, Taylor, and Walzer, respectively; nevertheless, it remains, and makes one skeptical about the project of multicultural liberalism as defended in all three instances. (O'Neill, 1999:223)

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (2000) argues that the liberal multicultural model of representation only deals with elites, does not consider change, does not solve inequalities, builds walls between communities and, furthermore, it is not up to the challenge of new identities and participation in the globalised world. This criticism is paradigmatic of post-multiculturalist perspectives, which believe that multiculturalism was an idea relevant to a time that no longer exists and we need to direct our efforts to new approaches.

On some other specific issues between the theory and the empirical evidence, Karin Reinhardt claims:

> Kymlicka aims to formulate a metatheory, with empirical examples supporting theoretical assumptions. In the end, this approach leads to the failure of his theory. The strict contrast between mononational and multinational states does not exist in reality and therefore the theoretical concept is unsupported. (2011:791)

The various critiques to multiculturalism can go on and on. Just in the few examples I mentioned there are claims of inconsistency, obsolescence and empirically unsupported concepts. Moreover, there is no easy way to organise such a diversity of issues.

My aim is to consider the multicultural debate outside the framework of its alleged failure and approach its limits, theoretical assumptions and derived issues instead. What I try to convey is that the impasse reached in the multicultural debate could be explained as a consequence of its principles and values, which limit the aims and potentials of the project. This is my attempt to achieve a more systematic

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opposition to Islam or *fatwa*. The multicultural aspect is visible because there was an attempt to extend the blasphemy law to include Rushdie's book, but that conflicted with the commitment to individual autonomy and free speech supported in liberal societies. The particular side that each multiculturalist took on this controversy is what O'Neill analyses.

and methodical approach to deal with some of the central issues of multicultural theory, paying attention especially to criticisms of essentialism, systems of categorisation, the unity of multicultural states and some ideological assumptions. In any case, a further justification for adopting this perspective is needed before starting the analysis.

The idea of limits is not completely unknown to the supporters and detractors of multiculturalism. For instance, Kymlicka has recently acknowledged some limits of his multicultural theory that were not so clear at its early stage, or that at some moment during its development were taken-for-granted.

> It is far from clear, in either theory or practice, what sort of multiculturalism is appropriate in contexts other than permanent settlement. (…) some of the preconditions of LMC are eroding. LMC, I would argue, was theorised for situations in which immigrants were seen as legally authorised, permanently settled, and presumptively loyal. In an age of securitisation and super-diversity, these assumptions are put into question. (Kymlicka, 2015:241-42)

These limits mentioned by Kymlicka have been unveiled by the shifting circumstances. However, if the success of a socio-political project depends on the fact that some initial and constant circumstances are immutable, then every project is doomed to fail before even it starts. Circumstances will always change over time, and to some extent, *mutatis mutandis*, the general project should adapt to different conditions. In any case, those preconditions that Kymlicka mentions are accidental and not essential to multicultural theory, abusing the Aristotelian terminology. The fundamental circumstances for multiculturalism persist, namely, modern, democratic, plural multinational states, where elementary human-rights and liberal principles are embraced and fostered by its institutions. As Kymlicka himself tries to demonstrate with his Multicultural Index, despite the backlash discourse, western democracies are moving forward with developing stronger multicultural programs. In consequence, the 'structural' preconditions for the multicultural project are not eroding, they are as stable as before.

The limits I try to unveil are not in the context, though it is clear that it has changed and obliges some adaptations that multiculturalism perhaps was not ready to implement. If my hypothesis holds, and I have chosen the appropriate perspective to identify the limits of the multicultural theory, at the end of the chapter I will be able to affirm that multiculturalism has not succeeded as expected because it is a western, liberal, democratic theory of social justice unable to consider diversity outside that reduced framework. In other words, we can ask, can multiculturalism only be achieved under liberal principles? Must it always be democratic? Is it only

suitable for western societies? Finally, we can inquire, is the kind of diversity it promotes the sort of diversity that we want to support?

Multiculturalism has been criticised over a considerable period of time and from different angles. Will Kymlicka, a regular recipient of reproaches of multicultural theory, categorises the critiques into anti-multiculturalist and post-multiculturalist. Anti-multiculturalists argue that multiculturalism is illiberal and contrary to modern values of individual freedom and democratic citizenship. On the other hand, post-multiculturalists accept multiculturalism is rooted in liberal principles, but they insist it has failed to address minorities' problems and has created new ones. (Kymlicka, 2015:211). Kymlicka himself has dedicated considerable effort to battle on both fronts. Since his first works such as *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (1989) and particularly *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), he advocated differentiated minority rights as compatible with liberal principles, responding that way to the anti-multiculturalists. It is understandable why some of the most orthodox liberals might believe otherwise, after all, the different approaches do try to expand the limits of classical liberalism. Despite that, they never go beyond it. On the other hand, he has also answered the post-multiculturalist critique associated with the idea of a multicultural backlash. Some of his recent scholarly pieces respond to the post-multiculturalist perspective, particularly *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure and Future* (2012b) and *The Essentialist Critique of Multiculturalism* (2015). However, post-multiculturalist criticism is a more challenging enterprise. The state of the current debate leads to a curious paradox that keeps is not easy to explain: post-multiculturalists critics often sympathise with the aims of the multicultural project but they keep proclaiming its failure.

> So, unlike anti-multiculturalists, these theorists are not out simply to score points against multiculturalism, or to ridicule or caricature it. In many ways their instincts are to sympathise with multiculturalist struggles. And yet they have all come to the conclusion that multiculturalism needs a radical overhaul, and in particular an overhaul of its essentialist tendencies. (Kymlicka, 2015:220-21)

Post-multiculturalism represents, in a broader sense, critiques centred on the idea of multicultural failure. Nevertheless, this claim can be sustained from very different perspectives and at different levels. As Kymlicka says: '…the post-multiculturalist critique conflates different potential targets, jumping from critiques of academic theories of liberal multiculturalism to critiques of government policies of multiculturalism to critiques of everyday street-level discourses or enactments of ethnic difference.' (2015:209) Also, such diverse topics rarely achieve a significant

impact on the theoretical framework or policymaking. 'While all of the authors begin with a strong rhetorical commitment to a radical overhaul of multiculturalism, by the end of their analysis, they have all backed away from making any radical proposals for change.' (2015:239) I think Kymlicka is right. The criticism usually is not so radical because they do not systematically organise the information, and because it does not always dig as deep as the theoretical principles or assumptions. Systematic here does not mean all-inclusive; a systematic critique of multiculturalism is not the one that catalogues every possible mistake but the one that articulates the attempts under the same paradigm.

Perhaps the first step to organise the critiques is by pointing out the main issues they cover, as Grillo does:

> There are six principal areas of controversy, problems with multiculturalist theory and practice: (1) multiculturalism's implicit essentialism; (2) the system of categorization which underpins it; (3) the form that multicultural politics takes; (4) the ritualization of ethnicity often associated with it; (5) the elision of race (and class) that it appears to entail; and (6) the attack on the 'common core' which it represents. (Grillo, 1998:195)

These six considerations are the topics that frequently arise in the critiques of multiculturalism, regardless of the fact there is no analysis of these issues that have been successfully established as an unavoidable reference. Most of the criticism is partial and does not connect systematically with other questions, besides they are usually far from being conclusive.

Most of the time, the questions are on the table but are incautiously developed. Several authors make insightful critiques, but they become just hints, that is to say, taken to their full logical and consequential bloom. Next, I analyse the problems of essentialism, flawed categorisation, social unity and some ideological assumptions and I consider them as limits on the multicultural theory. Clearly, they are just the beginning of something that will need further development. However, this text is a piece of that larger puzzle. What I describe next points out in that direction.

5.2 Essentialism

Before moving to analyse the critiques on multiculturalism as an essentialist theory, I need to go further in explaining my approach to dealing with the limits and assumptions of the project. I understand *limit* in reference to the Kantian sense, that

is, the legitimate extent of something. Kant refers to the limits of knowledge as the extent of what can be legitimately known: for my purposes, the limits of multiculturalism correspond to the extent of what multiculturalism as a socio-political project can legitimately achieve. In other words, instead of trying to demonstrate supposed essentialism as a cause of the multicultural backlash, we can consider it as a limit and investigate what restrictions set to the project.

The narrative of the backlash assumes *causal* connections between the theory and the failure that are not easy to demonstrate. One of the problems with the causal perspective is that many of the criticisms directed to the multicultural theory cannot be treated properly. For instance, it is virtually impossible to demonstrate -and in that case also to deny- essentialism as a cause or effect of anything, merely because there is no direct connexion between essentialism, howsoever it is considered, and social processes. That is why multiculturalism's supporters like Kymlicka can take the *Reductio ad absurdum* argument a bit far and include doses of irony:

> According to critics, multiculturalism actively 'encourages' people to think in essentialist terms, 'pressuring' people to act in essentialist ways, even 'forcing' and 'imposing' essentialist identities and practices on people. But all this talk of multiculturalism doing things out there in the world is hopelessly reified. (…) The post-multiculturalist literature is full of agentless processes. According to post-multiculturalists, there is this thing called multiculturalism that is telling people, encouraging people, pressuring people, forcing people -but it is never specified who is doing this talking, encouraging, pressuring or forcing. (Kymlicka, 2015:240)

Since the multicultural project's beginning, the issue of essentialism has been a recurrent component in the debates. However, as Grillo affirms: 'The charge of essentialism is frequently made, but rarely argued persuasively. "In the present deconstructive moment," says Werbner, "any unitary conception of a "bounded" culture is pejoratively labelled naturalistic and essentialist".' (Grillo, 1998:196)[51] The same opinion is backed by Kymlicka, who asserts that '…what appears to be an overwhelming consensus on LMC's essentialist flaws starts to dissolve into a more disparate and disjointed series of largely unsupported speculations and assertions.' (Kymlicka, 2015:221) The claims that essentialism is an issue for multiculturalism are not clearly developed, working on different levels and not clearly relating to each other. There is a hazy notion that cultural essentialism refers to '…the idea that a population may be defined by its presumed cultural specificity,' (Grillo, 1998:25) or that ethnic groups possess cultural specificities and distinctiveness. Other times the

[51] Werbner's reference corresponds to (1997b:3-4)

reproach of essentialism is motivated more by possible consequences than the accurate identification of a theoretical assumption.

> The positing of minority or immigrant cultures, which need to be respected, defended, publicly supported and so on, is said to appeal to the view that cultures are discrete, frozen in time, impervious to external influences, homogeneous and without internal dissent; that people of certain family, ethnic or geographical origins are always to be defined by them and indeed are supposed to be behaviourally determined by them. (Modood, 1998:378)

In more detail, the post-multicultural critique of essentialism is directed into two terms: culture and identity.[52] According to this critique, the essentialisation of culture and identity implies they are singular, simple, independent of its instances, fixed, beyond any possible change or criticism, homogeneous, uniform, and reductionist. In other words, they go against most of the values related to diversity such as multiplicity, complexity and, especially, agency. In Chapter 8, I will develop this issue further because it is a proper ontological assumption that must be addressed in that dimension. For now, it is enough to say that post-multiculturalists are afraid of cultural preservation because they believe it opposes to individual autonomy; they think that to essentialise minorities' identity leads us to consider their members as prisoners of their own cultures.

Each instance of multicultural theory I describe in this text shows fair concerns about this delicate balance between cultural preservation and human agency.[53] Kymlicka proposes to distinguish between external protections and internal restrictions to overcome this problem of suppressing individual freedom as a consequence of cultural preservation. Similarly, Taylor argues that a community can embrace a particular idea of the good and at the same time be liberal, that is, it can respect and foster diversity, difference and the right to disagree even if it openly embrace a particular cultural perspective. Parekh denies the universalism -monism- of any culture and proposes intercultural dialogue based on deliberation, which also preserves individual agency above the possible impositions of a culture over its individuals. The important question for my argument now is if preserving a culture always leads to a form of essentialism. I think the answer is yes and no.

Cultures and identities are constructed *and* determined, which means that they can be guided and changed but only within the already given determinations.

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[52] For instance, Anne Phillips (2007)

[53] Interculturalist appoaches also face similar issues. In Chapter 7, I analyse the problem of interventionism and precedence in the context of Québec interculturalism, which is another expression of this balance between cultural preservation and human agency.

As I said, I will justify this argument in Chapter 8; still, the tendencies to essentialise culture or identity are ontologically unavoidable. Essentialisation is part of a dialectic relation in which the opposite tendency is also present, that is, the constant change of the current state of affairs. We are culturally shaped and, at the same time, we are able to exercise our agency even against these determinations. I beg the reader to accept, for the sake of the argument and until I treat this properly, that at the fundamental level there is no way to avoid a form of essentialism in relation to identity.

The post-multicultural critique of essentialism is usually addressed to minorities for various reasons. I suspect that most of the times critiques believe essentialism in the case of minorities prevent the liberalisation that is pursued[54] in the process of integration and development of civic forms of identity. '…examples of illiberal cultures do exist, and an important question is whether or not what makes them distinctive could, in all cases, withstand the process of liberalization.' (McDonald, 1996:303) Additionally, critiques hardly consider that the mainstream culture also has the same structure and demands forms of social unity. This means there is an implicit essentialisation of the liberal culture that remains unnoticed. It is only when notions such as uniformity, neutrality or universality are questioned, that the same essentialisation of the mainstream culture in nation-states becomes evident in the liberal context. 'Both nations and ethnic groups are bodies of people bound together by common cultural characteristics and mutual recognition; moreover, there is no sharp dividing line between them.' (Miller, 1995:20) In consequence, the criticism that multiculturalism exaggerates internal unity of cultures can be equally applied to forms of -civic- culture already existing, including the liberal ones.

Critiques can emphasise fluidity within the groups, and this is possible pointing out the constructed nature of identity. However, when they do this, attention is directed at knowing to what extent identity is constructed and voluntary, though as soon as they turn back to the issue of social cohesion, they find themselves in the cycle of essentialisation. In this sense, we can affirm that multiculturalism is essentialist, not because it opposes itself to non-essentialist forms of collective identity, but because there is no way to affirm a form of identity that is not

[54] This idea of a process of liberalisation of minorities is clearer in the case of Kymlicka (2001b) and it has been already assimilated. For instance, Brian Walker affirms that, 'Perhaps we might understand Kymlicka as advocating just this sort of development when *he mentions that we should seek to promote liberalization in ethnic communities* rather than see

essentialist to some extent. Nonetheless, it does not mean there is no internal movement at the core of collective identities or that they are unable to change. I pause here and save these arguments for Chapter 8. This is clearly a philosophical problem as old as western philosophy and maybe more so: the problem of identity. How is it possible that what constantly changes at the same time remains itself; or the other way round, how is possible that what remains still constantly changes. (Gallois, 2016).

Essentialism sets a limit to multiculturalism in particular, and other liberal approaches of diversity and plurality in general, even if they try to avoid it. Essentialism is usually hidden behind the problem of social cohesion, a problem that comes back over and over again, pushing multiculturalism to return to the idea of national identity. It is also hidden in the notion of citizenship, which is understood by multiculturalist thinkers, mainly, as a way to achieve social integration in modern communities. Citizenship is supposed to serve an integrative function and help social unity (Kymlicka, 1995:Ch9). But before moving to the critical analysis of social cohesion there are a few more things to say about essentialism.

What we can do next is to ask why in some case essentialisation is considered problematic and others not, that is, why in the case of minorities it seems automatically wrong, but in the case of liberal mainstream societies it is not even spotted. Most of the time scholars set agency and will as the criteria. If something is chosen, not imposed, then it is not problematic. This is the difference between the essentialism of mainstream society and of the minorities. The first one is believed to permit and promote agency, the second one to restrict it. Majorities also operate on cultural motivations, but as long as they are democratic and liberal it is not considered a problem. In Chapter 8, I argue that at least on the ontological level, agency is never completely jeopardised, even in the case of restrictive communities; the same way, it is not absolutely guaranteed in liberal regimes. It is always part of a dialectical and historical process of choosing from what is available to us as real and objective determinations.

Especially Taylor (1994) and Modood (2015), seem to suggest that minorities have the right to essentialise their identity when they pursue their preservation and freedom. However, it is clear that any tendency of essentialisation implies the parallel internal struggle of reorganising, affirming or rejecting those pragmatically essentialised practices and values. In reality, we always have both

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such struggles as essentially pernicious.' (1997:229-30) Emphasis supplied.

processes running in tandem. If we want to see it in logical terms, every struggle for breaking some limits require the imposition of those limits in the first place. Essentialised identities always find their own internal criticism, which is qualitatively different from the one that can be made from the outside.

If we try to understand the whole process, we can say that multiculturalism is possible in the first place because it has denied essentialist conceptions of nationhood that exclude minorities. Then it is bizarre that it can be blamed for being essentialist when it starts trying to overcome one form of essentialism. The same happens to the post-multiculturalist critique of essentialism '…which is itself guilty of reification. According to critics, multiculturalism reifies ethnic groups as unified agents who speak and act with one unified voice. I would argue that this critique itself involves a reification of multiculturalism,' (Kymlicka, 2015:239) But this is not new, it is a phenomenon shared with civic nationalism, which already tried to move from essentialist ethnic forms of citizenship to civic ones, hoping that move would evade essentialism. However, as history proved, that was not always the case and for a long time, forms of civic national identity have excluded and misrecognised individuals. This is an important idea to develop, but unfortunately, I cannot do it in this text. I will save it for another time but I truly believe that the wrong assumption in all these matters can be expressed in this way: we tend to believe that *if something is inclusive, then it cannot essentialise.* Nonetheless I do not think this is the case, groups can essentialise and be inclusive.

5.3 Social cohesion

Let us keep in mind that multiculturalism fights the particular forms of essentialism preventing minorities from participation in the mainstream culture and national identity. However, it cannot avoid some sort of essentialisation when it deals with social cohesion. I reflect on this now.

My premise is that liberal societies, through political processes, shape and reproduce the limits of difference. Considering the unbreakable relation between plurality and unity, the way diversity is *legitimately* allowed within a liberal state is determined by its assumed notion of unity. The idea that institutions can organise and mediate in the case of a cross-cultural clash hides the fact that the state is not neutral. I argue that the state tends to create, impose and reproduce a civic form of uniformity in the communities, limiting in that sense the difference to what is in

correspondence to that minimum required for the mediation. In other words, not all forms of diversity are allowed in an inclusive liberal framework. It cannot be inclusive with illiberal practices and values. The most divisive debates in the multicultural theory refer to the practices and values that liberal societies are entitled to reject because of their supposed illiberality. '…for liberals the multicultural question is how is liberalism to cope with non-liberal groups (in American political theory usually and quite unselfconsciously referred to as 'illiberal groups'). (Modood, 2001:247)

The State, through multicultural citizenship, fosters diversity in a way that provides a context of choice for people, encouraging respect for others and facilitating political negotiation. However, it does not necessarily fight all dominant narratives. In a double movement, the state allows individuals to make their own choices, including keeping their culture and, at the same time, it promotes and usually imposes a particular culture that is condensed in the idea of the liberal national identity. And perhaps there is nothing wrong with this process in the sense that the content of that national identity could be positive and fulfil all its aims of unity and cohesion. Right now, I am just paying attention to the structure of the process. The question is why at some point do we have to come back to an essentialist form of identity? The answer is to secure social cohesion for the community. And this is an extremely difficult task. For instance, referring to Kymlicka's theory, Grillo says: '...his suggestion that "shared identity" will provide the basis for unity in multinational states (1995a: 187ff.) seems to beg all the questions of what and how'[55] (Grillo, 1998:236).

I try to avoid the causal perspective, as I mentioned in the last section. However, it is useful to go deeper into the debate as it has developed because it unmasks the basic concern: the possibility that liberal approaches also impose essentialist forms of identity in its search for social cohesion. For instance, Kymlicka is aware of the problems of trying to push a particular form of identity even if it is liberal and positive.

> What is the nature of this 'forcing' and 'imposing an identity on someone, and how do we distinguish it from, say, 'democratically persuading' someone to adopt an identity? Fraser says that multiculturalism enables group leaders to exercise 'moral pressure' on group members, and that this is how identities are 'imposed'. But what distinguishes moral pressure from moral persuasion? What criteria do we use to distinguish legitimate forms of argumentation and mobilisation from illegitimate 'moral pressure', 'force' and 'imposition', and how can we address these

[55] The reference to Kymlicka corresponds to *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995)

> latter problems without restricting basic civil and political liberties? (Kymlicka, 2015:237)

The possibility that multiculturalism allows the imposition of identity on minority individuals quickly expands to the sphere of the larger community. In this case, the distinction of internal restrictions and external protections does not seem suitable. Nevertheless, what is important now is that it remains unclear how the institutions of liberal societies can foster values in the majority culture without enforcing them. In other words, how can the structure of the modern states pressure and persuade its members to adopt liberal practices, values, and identities, gluing societies in the process, without imposing them, which would clearly be an internal restriction. And even further, it is not clear what is the fundamental difference between persuasion made by the liberal state and by minority groups.

We can follow Kymlicka and try to explain what 'democratically persuading' means and how a shared, persuaded identity would provide the basis for social unity in the case of liberal multinational states. Perhaps this is a very important clue to understanding further the mechanisms of social, cultural and political belonging.[56] We can try to fight the idea that every sort of collective representation is a form of essentialism. '…this indiscriminate accusation of essentialism, applied uncritically to all objectifications of collective agents, has tended, (…) to obscure processes of collective representation and self-representation which are *not* essentialist.' (Werbner, 1997a:228) or identify between some more plausible ways of essentialising. 'Bureaucratic fictions of unity essentialise, but they do so by objectifying communities situationally and pragmatically, in relation to notions of redistributive justice. This objectification is quite different from the violent essentialising of racism, or the mobilising, strategic essentialising of self-representation.' (Werbner, 1997a:247-48) I wish I had the time and room to explore these issues further but I can only flag them as possible topics for future research. For my current purposes, it is enough to mention the difficulties of the matter and how we can move forward with an ontological perspective.

The unity-diversity dialectic is a well-known problem in philosophy and so far, the proposals are not exactly positive; *there is no easy way to achieve the unity of what is diverse*. Kymlicka acknowledges this in asking 'What then are the possible sources of unity in a multination state which affirms, rather than denies, its national

[56] Without being able to provide any evidence. This democratic persuasion seems to be the model for political diversity and unity. However, it is not clear that the political model can be replicated in other spheres.

differences? I do not have a clear answer to this question. Indeed, I doubt that there are any obvious or easy answers available.' (Kymlicka, 1995:187)[57] I think the debate bares a fundamental difference between developing social cohesion, solidarity and loyalty -political identity- and recognising what we are -strong identity-.

There is a leap in trying to provide different groups with an equal context to develop themselves, through group-differentiated rights and proposing a theory of unity for these different groups in the same society. And again, this is not a malicious criticism; my aim is to spot a boundary that multiculturalism -and any other theories of plurality and diversity- will find over and over again. Some imposition is unavoidable and multicultural theorists should start their developments with an up-front clarification.

Scholars know quite well that plurality is related to unity and at some extent determined by it. Grillo argues, through a comparative socio-anthropological analysis, that the different configurations of political order -unity- constrain the manner in which plurality is embraced or denied in different societies.

> Pluralism is both a political philosophy and an analytical category, though in each guise it has many forms. All varieties, says Nicholls, share a common concern with 'the degree of unity and the type of unity which actually exist in particular states, or which ought to exist' (1974: 1), but there are different intellectual and theoretical traditions of pluralism which address different aspects of this common concern in different ways. (Grillo, 1998:5)[58]

In other words, diverse political and social configurations necessarily develop their own mechanisms for promoting and imposing unity within societies. In modern western states, plurality is restricted by the way communities organise life around some principles that work as social glue. If this is accurate, we would have a rich lode to assay not just about diversity and plurality in the western democracies but, about the unity of those multicultural western democracies. We have to deal with the possibility that our efforts to promote cross-cultural interaction and tolerance could be limited, and perhaps prevented, by the modern ambition to glue together communities through shared identities. It seems somewhat clear that liberal societies in their modern configuration tend to choose unity over diversity when the

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[57] In the same section, Kymlicka mentions the most common proposals of unity: political values -equality, dialogue, tolerance, support for diversity, compassion and generosity- , a shared conception of justice. But he argues that only shared identity can secure the unity. Unfortunately, he cannot suggest any content to this shared identity leaving the door open to proposals. 'A fundamental challenge facing liberal theorists, therefore, is to identify the sources of unity in a democratic multination state. (1995:192)

[58] The reference to Nicholls corresponds to *Three Varieties of Pluralism* (1974)

tension between these two terms demands some resolution. ‘Under modernity, the state acknowledged it had such an interventionist role, though usually it intervened to suppress rather than promote difference.’ (Grillo, 1998:236)

The classical problem of unity and diversity gained renewed importance when modern western states faced the complexity of reconstituting themselves as multinational and/or polyethnic. However, in these days of far-right governments and anti-immigrant sentiments, fostering the communities’ unity becomes dangerous, especially when it takes the need for loyalty, allegiance and solidarity too far. We are witnessing new forms of ‘bad’ nationalism that are not easily distinguishable than the ‘good’ one, especially because they seem to pose the same questions. In any case, this claim for unity preaches that it is only possible amongst members sharing the same nationality, which is not an unheard of idea. For the most orthodox political theory, social unity is only possible if members share a core of common ideas that make them agree to be part of a given community.

> For liberals like Mill, democracy is government ‘by the people’, but self-rule is only possible if ‘the people’ are ‘a people’—a nation. The members of a democracy must share a sense of political allegiance, and common nationality was said to be a precondition of that allegiance. (Kymlicka, 1995:52)

In other words, social cohesion could only be achieved by developing and spreading one culture, the culture that brought together those members in the first place. Beyond equality, freedom, democracy, and all the liberal principles, multicultural theory should explain how multicultural states achieve social cohesion and how this social cohesion is *qualitatively* different than the far-right, conservative one.

5.4 Categorisation of culture, nation and people

Critics often see the seeds of essentialism in the categories used in a theory. This is not different in the case of multiculturalism, particularly its notion of culture seems to be an instance of what Seyla Benhabib (2002:4) calls *the reductionist sociology of culture*, that is, the assumption that cultures are delineable wholes congruent with population groups. I think this particular criticism goes a little bit too far, however, it draws attention to the importance of better comprehending the categories of multicultural theory. Categories and their articulation set some limits on what the multicultural project can and cannot achieve.

As I said in Chapter 4, in multicultural theory, several concepts are related but not necessarily equivalent. Nation, culture, people and ethnic group are defined in terms of each other. The mutual implications denote the tight connections and overlaps between the groups, as well as the difficulties of drawing a clean line to differentiate them. Consequently, this complexity opens the door to important questions. For instance, it is not clear if the definitions have a utilitarian perspective or an ontological one. That is to say, it is unclear if the groups are co-defined in that way to organise the theory in such a manner that they might achieve recognition, or if they are defined thusly because it reflects their ontological distinctiveness. As soon as the concepts show their similitudes and relations, it becomes clearer that linking nations, peoples and ethnic groups by considering them instances of cultures leads to issues that demand further investigation.

First, let me try to understand the connections. In the way they are defined by Kymlicka for example, every nation corresponds to a culture, the same way every ethnic group and indigenous people can be considered part of a culture. The definition of the objects of multiculturalism gets more intricate when the aims and characteristics of every group surface. Theoretically, indigenous peoples can form a nation even if they are not formally considered one. However, in that case, they become a different kind of minority, they become a national minority[59], which might lead them to develop slightly different claims. In contrast to this, ethnic groups in the context of immigration do not seek a particular territory in the host state or to develop their particular institutions. Therefore, they tend to express their distinctiveness in the private sphere, not public life. Immigrant groups look for institutional integration. Most of the time, national minorities and indigenous peoples seek instead to have their own institutions. The definitions show this issues in more detail.

A nation is defined as:

> …a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture. A "nation" in this sociological sense is closely related to the idea of a "people" or a "culture"—indeed, these concepts are often defined in terms of each other. A country which contains more than one nation is, therefore, not a nation-state but a multination state, and the smaller cultures form "national minorities." (Kymlicka, 1995:11)

A culture is understood as:

[59] There are more nuances lost in the definitions. For instance, taking indigenous peoples as a particular culture can lead us to ignore tribal differences.

> …synonymous with "a nation" or "a people" –that is, as an intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history. And a State is multicultural if its members either belong to different nations (a multination state) or have emigrated from different nations (a polyethnic state). (Kymlicka, 1995:18)

There is an aspect of the definitions that allows multiculturalism to move forward with some of its aims; positive consequences could derive from this net of self-referential definitions. From this perspective, nations and their members are glued together by a shared culture, which is not necessarily reduced to racial or ethnic features but based in language and history. This insight allows liberal communities to develop political plurality within the same state without giving up the idea of social cohesion. In other words, by the means of these definitions, we can achieve both political plurality and social cohesion. Political plurality is possible because the same culture includes a diversity of interests and ideas of the good; social cohesion is attained through allegiance to a shared *civic* culture. However, the definition of culture as an intergenerational community sharing language and history makes it hard to imagine how newcomers can fulfil these requirements to *integrate* into the mainstream community.

Liberal scholars try to reduce this wider shared culture to purely formal, political and institutional allegiance to some principles but, in that case, it is not clear if the larger liberal society also needs a shared language and history to remain together in the first place. The most radical forms of cosmopolitanism would argue that there is not need of any allegiance, an idea I analyse further in Chapter 6. In the case of multiculturalism, it seems to imply both, it claims that liberal societies are glued together, like any other culture, by language and shared history but also by the liberal principles. What I find important to mention here is that the theory's emphasis oscillates in according to what scholars want to argue in each moment. When they deal with plurality, they emphasise language, history and other features that deserve to be protected; usually in the case of plurality what matters most is cultural preservation. On the other hand, if they emphasise the larger community's unity, they draw on more abstract political principles and impersonal institutions, that is, they emphasise the liberal 'nature' of the western societies. As a result, there are two different ways to glue communities, language and history for the small group, and liberal principles for the larger one. But given the definition of culture and the need for cohesion, large group solidarity cannot be reduced solely to allegiance to liberal principles.

> Such states have a national identity that is not reducible to universal laws and norms or even to a legal -political framework, and also have a cultural aspect- such as a language(s), a specific history, a religion or set of religions, national memories and an official calendar, ceremonies, memorials and other symbols, marked by these religions and histories; and this culture is central to what state-funded schools are required to teach. While this national identities should be common to all citizens they are inevitably deeply shaped by 'the majority culture', parts of which may sometimes even be indistiguishable from the 'national culture'. (Modood, 2015:356)

And we are once again back to square one. Anyone can be integrated into a multicultural nation if she can adopt the shared *civic* culture, but this is not just a set of principles and values. It includes a plethora of existential, historical and symbolic commitments. The majority is -by definition- not neutral and its culture includes hard-to-swallow requirements, particularly shared language and history.[60] Let me clarify. It is not the case that individuals integrating into a liberal society are unable to learn the language and history of the host society. However, *it is not their history and oftentimes not their language*; these are matters that go beyond the pragmatic acquisition of knowledge and skills.[61] The opposite case seems more plausible. Those integrating into the larger community want to find ways to preserve their language and history and not just adopt a 'foreign' one. Kymlicka is right when he identifies them as essential for any culture. Therefore, in order to be the base for the social unity of culture, language and history have to be much more than just pragmatic acquisitions. Modood unveils the importance of this issue when he suggests that the national history

> …must seek to include aspects of the presence of minorities and their contribution to the ongoing development of the country. (…) The national history will therefore not be simply a history of the majority; indeed it will show how compositions of the majority are themselves a feature of historical evolution. (Modood, 2015:361-62)

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[60] This limitation is something that scholars like Kymlicka are aware of. 'Immigrants are no longer expected to assimilate entirely to the norms and customs of the dominant culture, and indeed are encouraged to maintain some aspects of their ethnic particularity. But this commitment to 'multiculturalism' or 'polyethnicity' is a shift in *how* immigrants integrate into the dominant culture, not whether they integrate.' (Kymlicka, 1995:78)

[61] Kymlicka says: '…for a culture to survive and develop in the modern world, given the pressures towards the creation of a single common culture in each country, it must be a societal culture. Given the enormous significance of social institutions in our lives, and in determining our options, any culture which is not a societal culture will be reduced to ever-decreasing marginalization. The capacity and motivation to form and maintain such a distinct culture is characteristic of 'nations' or 'peoples' (i.e. culturally distinct, geographically concentrated, and institutionally complete societies). Societal cultures, then, tend to be national cultures.' (1995:80) If the language and history of the mainstream culture do not coincide with the those of the national minority and the immigrant groups, then it is not clear how these groups, trying to protect exactly language and history, can integrate in the mainstream culture, its language and history beyond any pragmatic benefit they receive.

Opposite to what we might expect, multiculturalism is not an idea of different peoples or cultures interacting one with another in the context of positive relations but specific groups dealing with larger societies during integration processes. Taylor and later Parekh tried a gentler approach to the problem. In Taylor's account, identity has a dialogic character (1994:32). Therefore, the cultural identity that brings the different groups together should by dialogically established. However, this dialogue never reaches the core of the mainstream values and practices, those remain untouched. The dialogue proposed by Taylor has historically also been a process of integration. His account of the conditions necessary to develop identity says little or nothing about the power relations involved in that 'dialogue' between cultures -a topic dealt with extensively in Chapters 6 and 7-. It is indeed a complex matter that we need to understand also in its implications and limits.

5.5 Minorities, majorities and power relations

There is another way the analysis of central categories to the multicultural theory discloses a limit. In this case, I refer to the concepts of minority and majority. These are designed to denote the disadvantaged situation of particular groups. However, it is not clear that categories like minorities and majorities are the best way to aim for diversity, respect, and tolerance. It seems that, from the three objects of multiculturalism, this could suit immigrants, but not particularly national and indigenous groups. If it is true that 'Most countries in the Americas are both multinational and poly-ethnic, as are most countries in the world.' (Kymlicka, 1995:22) then it becomes less clear that groups suffering from hierarchical relations, intolerance or racism could be considered minorities. In the case of Canada or the United States it is easier to label the groups suffering from some hierarchical behaviour as minorities, but in Latin-American countries, being a great source of cultural diversity, indigenous and national peoples are not necessarily minorities.[62] According to the *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* ((ECLAC), 2019), in countries like Bolivia indigenous population reached 62% in the year 2000 and 41% in Guatemala. Discrimination, intolerance, and bigotry are sometimes directed against a sizeable proportion of the population.

The same phenomenon can be found in gender issues: women could be

[62] South Africa and many other examples could be included in this category.

considered a minority in the sense they suffer from hierarchical and uneven relationships in respect to men, but they are not strictly speaking a minority group. Criticising Taylor's concept of recognition, Susan Wolf affirms that 'The predominant problem for women as women is not that the larger or more powerful sector of the community fails to notice or be interested in preserving women's gendered identity, but that this identity is put to the service of oppression and exploitation.' (1992:76) Other important feminists such as Nancy Fraser (1989) and Iris Young (1990) have developed this criticism further. It is evident that the minority-majority framework tries to reflect the uneven power relationships between two or more groups, but it is not equally evident that a *quantitative* concept could represent accurately a *qualitative* circumstance.

If we consider uneven relationships in terms of minorities and majorities, it would seem that the oppression suffered by a group is the result of the culture of the few not being recognised by the many, therefore, a pragmatic approach to reduce those numbers seems plausible. However, the important problem is that power relations subsume some groups in relationships of oppression and persecution, despite the proportions. In other words, it is perhaps more important to have a deeper recognition than a larger but superficial one.

Within the majority and minority groups, there are struggles to break free from hegemonic values. This is the same power relation that might lead us to talk about a majority within the minorities and vice-versa, usually referred to as *elite*. However, it seems that quantifying members, instead of the strength of the power relation partially mislead the effort. A conceptual duo like minority-majority is not about numbers but about power. It is not about some cultural values that seem incompatible with those supported by most people; it is about the impositions of some hegemonic values over others no matter how many people endorse them. Actually, the processes of liberalisation do take this idea and engage in dynamics to challenge archaic belief systems even if they are supported by most of the population. Sadly, there is a limit where it ceases questioning them: the moment where the hegemonic notions are already liberal.

Along with the misleading quantitative perspective, multiculturalists assume that the conflicts between majorities and minorities are consequences of cultural differences and not power struggles which I suspect is a significant mistake. I am not saying there are no cultural ingredients involved in the conflicts, but usually they are not the core of the problems. In Chapter 2 I developed this idea.

Multicultural theory assumes that illiberal and undemocratic hierarchies are the result of racialist ideologies and, therefore, that conflicts are built upon ethnic differences, instead of more complex power relations. Leaving Parekh aside on this point, most multiculturalists do not seem to realise liberal societies are also oppressive in their own ways. They believe that in western democracies the liberal principles of equality, individual freedom, and social justice would eventually address oppression and inequality, or at least not make it worse. Therefore, the best way to spread diversity is by spreading liberal ideals. Additionally, as said in the last section, recognition of the Other is determined by a process of the minority incorporation into larger societies. Due to those boundaries, any other sort of inequality is beyond the reach of multicultural theory. The only kind of power relationships it is able to directly address are those coming from the integration process and illiberal ideologies.

For instance, the inequality that multiculturalism mostly wants to address with the idea of group-differentiated rights is the mode of incorporation of minority groups in larger societies, but that does not necessarily elucidate the problem of fundamental hierarchical relations. John MacInnes argues that identities do not always generate societies, but sometimes, certain social groups legitimise identities, trying to disguise hegemonic values as shared principles (2006:680&687). Quite often, the conflicts are not between majorities and minorities, but between elites and groups challenging the hegemonic values.

Homogenisation, exactly which multiculturalism fights against, is a result of power relations, material and ideological conditions, and not necessarily a problem of majorities oppressing minorities. We can affirm, referring to scholars such as Adorno (2012), that modern majorities can also be the result of processes of ideological homogenisation that convey the ideas of the status quo. In that sense, it seems multiculturalism walks halfway towards its proposal of fighting hierarchical relationships; it tries to protect minorities from an unfair imposition of the majority's culture and individuals from restrictions in their communities, but it does not provide protection from impositions within the liberal framework. In practical terms this means that within the multicultural framework, a woman from a minority group could be protected from illiberal and uneven cultural practices carried on by her community, only to suffer other kinds of unequal cultural practices and relationships imposed by the mainstream culture (Crenshaw, 1995; Volpp, 2001). She might go from one hierarchical relation to another. In other words, the liberal framework is not

free of uneven relationships.

Even if liberals argue that a proper application of liberalism must end the internal hierarchical relations in western democracies, the idea of a mainstream culture denotes some homogenisation. Despite that, I am not saying that multiculturalism must come up with a holistic solution to the hierarchical relations, I am saying that because of the way it is configured and its assumptions, multiculturalism reaches its limit in the uneven relationships of integration processes, leaving deeper power relations potentially untouched.

Multiculturalism assumes that liberal societies are the only fit judge of hierarchical relations. Paradoxically, this assumption cements a hierarchy, while also ignoring that some -if not all- hierarchical relations make sense only within the minority group's cultural practices. As Robert Goodin asserts, 'Kymlicka is perfectly prepared to say that some cultures are better than others. In agreeing to countenance liberalizing reforms, Kymlicka has conceded the superiority of cultures that are more liberal, that facilitate choice and expand choices.' (2006:294) And more importantly, allowing, facilitating and expanding choices is without a doubt a great improvement in many ways. However, they do not necessarily lead to the abolishment of hierarchical and uneven relationships. We have to go further and unveil the idea behind the way multiculturalism understands and deals with hierarchical relationships. I do this in the next section.

5.6 Ideology and the internal source of inequality and oppression

I have mentioned before that some important part of multiculturalism assumes that discrimination and oppression over others is mainly a consequence of archaic belief systems. That is to say, the problem resides in the different dimensions of an embedded ignorance expressed by '…the imposition of some cultures on others, and (…) the assumed superiority that powers this imposition.' (Taylor, 1994:63) Alternatively, discrimination is understood also as the result of the fear of difference and intolerance.

> …there is always the danger that one's slightest difference or past background might be made the basis of discrimination by the whole or a section of the wider society. The demand for total assimilation springs from intolerance of differences, and for the intolerant even the smallest differences are sources of deep unease. (Parekh, 2000:198)

This theoretical treatment of discrimination and hierarchical *behaviour* tends

to emphasise the problem's ideological dimension. Even if it might accept some material base for the hierarchical ideologies, it focuses on understanding discrimination, inequality and racism as a set of thoughts, beliefs and behaviours shaped by illiberal ideologies. In consequence, implementation of a liberal ideology supported by principles of human rights, civil liberties and democratic citizenship is the solution to the problems of discrimination and inequality. Both the mainstream society and minorities must be liberalised (Kymlicka, 2001b, 2015). Liberal laws and policies generated through state institutions and an embrace of the ideological change they imply define anti-discrimination efforts. In this account of hierarchical ideologies, the progressive historical process gradually has gotten rid of irrational stands to replace them with a formal and ideological liberal framework of enlightened values.

In order to find the limitations of this stand, we can contrast it to other approaches. More materialist perspectives of ideology, inspired by - for instance - Marx's philosophy, would tend to emphasise the material conditions supporting any ideology and the structural reasons for their existence. Instead of assuming a progressive process towards a world ruled by enlightened values, the materialist view of ideology points out the interests of particular groups and systematic power relations. Multiculturalism fights the idea of superiority as a form of ideology. However, this idea of superiority finds its explanation in the mixture of external and institutionalised conditions and not only in the complex crossings of people's beliefs, opinions, knowledge, values and emotions that we name ideology.

A classical term related to discrimination like *Xenophobia*, from the Greek *xenos* -foreigner- and *phobos* -fear-, clearly illustrates the historical tendency to consider discrimination and some related issues as part of individual psyches. Multiculturalism follows an important body of literature that ascribes an internal source to discrimination and an unconscious source to racist beliefs:

> Americans share a common historical and cultural heritage in which racism has played and still plays a dominant role. Because of this shared experience, we also inevitably share many ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that attach significance to an individual's race and induce negative feelings and opinions about nonwhites. To the extent that this cultural belief system has influenced all of us, we are all racists. At the same time, most of us are unaware of our racism. We do not recognize the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or the occasions on which those beliefs affect our actions. In other words, a large part of the behavior that produces racial discrimination is influenced by unconscious racial motivation. (Lawrence, 1987:322)

The materialist perspective on hierarchies and discrimination is not enough

to deny or contradict the idealist take, which has substantial evidence to support it. Nevertheless, it shows that the latter must be complemented and to some extent contested. Even if racism and bigotry partially rest on a psychological dislike of the unfamiliar or different, this is a partial explanation, a psychological dimension of something that also has political and social roots, even philosophical roots expressed by the way we deal with otherness in general.

It is instructive to mention that along with the identification of the source of the problem comes necessarily paired a proposal to revert the negative effects. If in the eyes of multicultural theory the problem corresponds to the adoption of unjustified and illiberal ideologies, then the solution embraces the development of social and political changes on the basis of liberalisation processes. More specifically, '…turning the earlier catalogue of hierarchical relations into relationships of liberal-democratic citizenship.' (Kymlicka, 1995:6)

In the same way, the identification of the problems also suggest the means to achieve their possible solution. Multiculturalism is developed under the overarching ideology of liberalism and it trusts that the way to fight the old-fashioned hierarchies is through its greatest achievement: political institutions, citizenship, laws and policies. Through liberal-democratic citizenship and institutions, the progress of western societies will eventually erase *prejudices* directed at minority groups. According to an old formula, the Enlightenment foundation of modern States would make increasingly evident that the more liberal and democratic a society gets, the more equal and fair it becomes. In consequence, what we need is to fully embrace the values of equality, freedom and fraternity set theoretically by the Enlightenment and expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is true that through liberalism we can find various takes on and understandings of different issues, but it seems to exist unanimous support to state institutions. I mention just one instance that is particularly lucid in defining the key role of institutions in liberal ideology but, that in essence, repeats countless times.

> The moral meaning of democracy is found in reconstructing all institutions so that they become instruments of human growth and liberation. (…) Liberal democracy is a social strategy for enabling individuals to live the good life. It is unalterably opposed to ignorance. It trusts that knowledge and understanding have the power to set people free. Its lifeblood is free communication building on freedom of inquiry, speech, and assembly. (…) The idea of moral absolutes and a fixed hierarchy of values is rejected. No idea of the good is above criticism, but this does not lead to a directionless relativism. (Rockefeller, 1992:91-92)

This understanding of bigotry and discrimination I have described is what

approaches such as critical race theory calls *integrationist ideology.* I developed this idea extensively in Chapter 2. However, it was necessary to describe at least some of its assumptions and limitations that can be spotted in multiculturalism. I think the most worrying conclusion that we can derive from this emphasis on the internal source of oppression is that important efforts can be lead away from material, systematic sources of inequality and discrimination. Particularly alarming to me are the lack of criticism on liberal institutions and the overconfidence in citizenship.

5.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I argued that the way multiculturalism is constructed sets some limits to its efforts. I intended to move away from usual criticisms and go further into the assumptions behind them. I proposed what we can call a *limits approach*. In consequence, I tried to develop my own assessment of some criticisms. For instance, I do believe that the liberal framework can be too formal, too rigid, and tends to be rapidly quasi-naturalised. However, I drew attention to the fact this is unavoidable. It is a natural consequence of any sort of categorisation. It seems to me that despite the categorisation, multiculturalism is able to recognise that the inequality suffered by different communities is a consequence of political and social processes. It is this clarity what allows it to claim that minorities sometimes need protection from majorities advocating group-differentiated rights as a result. Multiculturalism is not a theoretical edifice erected without attention to current social and political circumstances, completely the opposite; it is a theoretical effort moved by concrete inequality issues. It might get lost in the middle of its own categorisations and assumptions, but its aims and efforts try to reach and improve the real circumstances of particular groups.

This is important to mention because, like any other possible approach, multicultural theory assumes a formal perspective to define its objects, one that can be challenged in different ways. When concepts like culture, people, nation or identity are defined, multiculturalists cannot avoid fixed markers because this cannot be done without assuming something is shared more or less *uniformly*. However, this is not the most problematic set of issues. The fundamental concerns rest on the assumptions behind the particular categorisations. In the definitions of a people or a cultural community, we frequently find reference to a shared language, history, a given territory and common institutions. (Kymlicka, 1995:18) We know these

particular definitions are not unique and could be constructed in a different way. However, what I find more crucial is why those categories were constructed in that particular way, to investigate its possible intentions and draw its limits.

In more particular terms, in this chapter, I argued that there is a dialectical tension between the aim of cultural preservation and individual agency. One of multiculturalism's main drivers to define categories the way they do and leading to some forms of essentialisation is the need for social cohesion. However, this results in a paradox: civic forms of social cohesion were intended to fight essentialist forms of identity. Additionally, I claimed that the majority-minority dichotomy is more about power than numbers and that cultural conflicts are most of the times power struggles. Finally, I analysed the tendency to consider discrimination and bigotry as a result of ideological processes and not material or philosophical ones.

After this detour through some criticisms of multiculturalism, we are able to affirm that it has not been as successful as expected not because it is flawed. On the contrary, it has not been as successful because, at the end of the day, it is a solid instance of a western, liberal, democratic theory of justice that is unable to consider diversity outside its confines. As a socio-political movement, multiculturalism is the attempt to expand that framework without breaking it. Therefore, we can rethink the aims of the multicultural project, its limits and its assumptions. We cannot continue on the same track in which, our modern heroes have made us believe, this cyclops that keeps millions of people feeling like outsiders in their own home, can be defeated only with cleverness, open-mindedness and liberal ideologies. Policies, rights and laws help a lot but they are not enough.

Chapter 6

Overcoming multiculturalism? Interculturalism and diversity in the new century

In *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* (1999 [1944]), Jorge Luis Borges relates the story of a fictional 20th-century French author who tried to write, word by word, line by line, the Quixote. He intended neither to copy the original, nor to write a new version; he wanted to write the exact same book in a different context and a different time. He did not aspire to think, believe, talk or live like Cervantes; he did not wish to be a 17th-century writer in the 20th-century. He wanted to be himself, Pierre Menard, keeping his context, beliefs, and everything else that make him who he was and, nevertheless, to write the same book Cervantes did. The narrator remarks that Menard wrote chapters IX, XXXVIII and a fragment of XXII and they coincide word by word with Cervantes' original. However, this is not the most striking part of the story, and here is Borges' brilliance, the very same words in Menard's version had a completely different meaning, making it far better than the original. Beyond the greatness of Borges' short story, it reminds me of the tension between interculturalism and multiculturalism.

Interculturalism, like Pierre Menard, tried to build its own liberal proposal on diversity and plurality from and for the new century; a century marked by globalisation, waves of migration and liberal progress. Even if we can say that it shares the same aims as multiculturalism and other liberal theories of diversity and plurality, it claims to face them from a completely different perspective, opposite in some respects. After facing this endeavour, interculturalists did not end up with a word by word version of multiculturalism, but they propose something quite similar. So similar that the rest of us struggle to spot the difference. Although it tried to come up with something completely different, interculturalism might have written

multiculturalism again.

Particularly eye-catching is the place interculturalism claims for itself in the pantheon of pluralist theorists. Accounts promoting interculturalism have an almost obsessive tendency to place themselves in contrast to multiculturalism. Theories abound as to why: perhaps because multiculturalism has, during the last decades, been the dominant narrative on cultural diversity, perhaps because interculturalism has been primarily promoted from the policy-making sphere, or simply because of the sort of dynamics that often occur between two competing theories[63]; but the fact remains that interculturalists frequently present its approach as criticising and correcting mistakes made by multicultural theory. 'Academic and public debates go through cycles, and one of the current fashions is to defend a (new, innovative, realistic) "interculturalism" against a (tired, discredited, naive) "multiculturalism".' (Kymlicka, 2012a:211)

The contrast is kept in such *hazy* terms, that it is hard to draw clear lines between the two approaches. Despite the efforts of scholars and policymakers advocating interculturalism to distance it from multiculturalism, the differences are not clear enough. The situation is such that scholars have devoted equal or more effort to discussing the distinction as to its own intellectual content. The difficulties separating one perspective from the other have encouraged some scholars to deny that there is a significant difference between them. The reasons for this include claims of mis-characterisation of multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2012a; Meer & Modood, 2018; Taylor, 2012), '…to relabel some multicultural measures as intercultural politics.' (Loobuyck, 2018:225), or claims that contrasting both approaches is a form of political rhetoric instead of a substantial differentiation (Kymlicka, 2018a). For now, it is enough to keep in mind that interculturalism usually presents itself in opposition to multiculturalism, even though they share, if not the same, at least similar aims.

This Chapter and the next are closely related, being mainly devoted to analysing the assumptions on identity and recognition in the main intercultural theories. I investigate whether interculturalism is explicitly or implicitly dealing with the kind of complex identity and strong recognition I assert is lacking in other liberal theories of diversity and plurality. Ultimately, I will argue that the intercultural

[63] It is fair to mention that in Latin America the dominant narrative has been *interculturalidad* -a particular form of interculturalism- and multiculturalism is the challenging approach. In consequence, in these countries *interculturalidad* has not been an alternative or reaction to multiculturalism, which is the case in European countries or Canada. Cf. (Solano-Campos,

perspective is far from being the way to secure deep recognition of the other and to deal with identity at the most fundamental level. However, even if not all the claims and criticisms interculturalism presents are accurate and valid, altogether they allude to some limitations of other liberal theories and their inability to deal with strong forms of recognition and identity. The use of contrast and the tone intercultural scholars deploy can be questioned, but overall, their criticism does emphasise social features of diversity other liberal theories may not always address effectively. I do not believe issues such as a lack of interaction, ghettoisation, positive communication between members of different groups, or discrimination, are consequences of the multicultural policies, as some advocates of interculturalism suggest, but they certainly point out problems deserving further discussion.

Intercultural claims unveil a dissonance between the institutional and political weight of policies, the theoretical framework to justify group-differentiated rights and their not so equally large impact in many cross-cultural interactions. As I argue in this chapter, if interculturalism has achieved a large amount of support it is not precisely because of its theoretical advantages over other pluralist perspectives, but because of the urgency of addressing the issues of cross-cultural interactions. The widespread perception (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008; Cantle, 2012; Grillo, 2018; Guidikova, 2014; Wood, 2015) that something has to be done to foster the bonds between different groups is evidence of the lack of a strong recognition at both levels, in the real world and in theoretical accounts addressing diversity and pluralism.

The chapter is divided into four sections before its Conclusion. In the first, I explain the two forms of interculturalism: Québécois and European. Both of them are founded in the particularities of their respective cases, not a unified theoretical framework. In the next part, I analyse the idea of intercultural dialogue as a key proposal for positive interaction between individuals and groups. I emphasise that the intercultural proposal focuses on pursuing positive contact, instead of securing recognition: that is, it refuses to categorise the individuals, pushing a cosmopolitan understanding of identity. The third section is devoted to examining a new form of diversity, a super-diversity, that appeared along with the process of globalisation. I particularly argue that this new form of diversity does not represent a qualitative change in the way we form our identity and, therefore, even in super-diverse cities, individuals still develop an allegiance to particular groups. Finally, I suggest that

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interculturalism, although not radically different than multiculturalism, points out important issues that the liberal theories of diversity and plurality have been unable to address.

6.1 Two forms of interculturalism

There are two forms of interculturalism: the first kind blossoming in Québec as an alternative to Canadian multiculturalism, and the other form, European interculturalism, being developed taking into account the particular circumstances of migration in Europe. Gérard Bouchard (2011, 2018), Charles Taylor (2012), Alain Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino (2007) have developed the clearest accounts of Québécois interculturalism. On the other hand, Ted Cantle (2012, 2018), Ricard Zapata-Barrero (2015, 2018), and Irena Guidikova (2015, 2018) have made important contributions to intercultural theory in Europe. Both places, Québec and Europe, share an unsuitability to or prior failed attempts at multiculturalism. Both were also firstly expressed in public policy documents, which is an important fact to keep in mind because in contrast to multiculturalism, which simultaneously adopted particular policies and developed a theoretical structure, interculturalism does not have such a robust theoretical scaffolding. In fact, as we will see, when scholars of interculturalism move from the descriptive aspects of their own ideas and policies to theoretical justification, they find themselves very close to multicultural notions.

> That is to say that while advocates of interculturalism wish to emphasise its positive qualities in terms of encouraging communication, recognising dynamic identities, promoting unity and challenging illiberality, each of these qualities already feature (and are on occasion foundational) to multiculturalism too. (Meer & Modood, 2012:192)

In most cases, intercultural proposals do not find legitimacy in the strength of their theoretical considerations, but in the particularities of the European and Québécois cases. This procedure is not wrong as a public policy practice but makes it hard to reveal the underlying theoretical ground. It could be for this reason that interculturalists overemphasise the particularities of each circumstance. Another potential reason is interculturalism's reliance on negative -i.e. the failure and inadequacy of multicultural policies- rather than positive argumentation. In other words, if we do not accept the inadequacy of multiculturalism in these cases, there would not be any legitimate reason to switch to the intercultural formulation. If we borrow Kuhn's terms and consider interculturalism a novel theory, it must be driven

by the failure of the existing one to solve important anomalies.[64] This would explain the emphasis on the insolvency of multiculturalism in the first place. But to further elaborate the analogy, interculturalism would have to convey at least two additional points: 1) how and why it would better solve the diversity puzzles that multiculturalism cannot, whilst also retaining its more important achievements; and, 2) how the intercultural proposal is radically different from the multicultural one, making it impossible for the latter to reach the same results.[65]

Both of these conditions are still debated. Constant overlap seems to be the case, denoting a lack of paradigm differentiation between inter- and multi-culturalism.[66]

Interculturalism in Québec was described in a report made by the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, chaired by Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, entitled *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation* (2008). In the case of European interculturalism, The Council of Europe (COE) has published *Living Together As Equals in Dignity*, better known as the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008); and *Intercultural Cities: Towards a Model for Intercultural Integration* (2010).

Québécois interculturalism *a)* institutes French as the common language of intercultural relations; *b)* cultivates a pluralistic orientation that is concerned with the protection of rights; *c)* preserves the necessary creative tension between diversity, on the one hand, and the continuity of the French-speaking core and the social link, on the other hand; *d)* places special emphasis on integration and participation; and *e)* advocates interaction. (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:21)

Contrastingly, European interculturalism argued that.

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[64] 'If awareness of anomaly plays a role in the emergence of new sorts of phenomena, it should surprise no one that a similar but more profound awareness is prerequisite to all acceptable changes of theory.' (Kuhn, 2012:67)

[65] 'First, the new candidate must seem to resolve some outstanding and generally recognized problem that can be met in no other way. Second, the new paradigm must promise to preserve a relatively large part of the concrete problem-solving ability that has accrued to science through its predecessors. Novelty for its own sake is not a desideratum in the sciences as it is in so many other creative fields. As a result, though new paradigms seldom or never possess all the capabilities of their predecessors, they usually preserve a great deal of the most concrete parts of past achievement and they always permit additional concrete problem-solutions besides.' (Kuhn, 2012:169)

[66] Bouchard (2011) believes the two models do not belong to the same paradigm. Multiculturalism works on a paradigm of diversity -which is understood as a denial of a majority culture- and interculturalism does it on a paradigm of duality -acceptance of a majority culture-. However, this chapter ventures to prove that this difference is insufficient to claim them as substantially divergent paradigms.

> *Intercultural dialogue* is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world. (Europe & Ministers, 2008:10-11)

From these broad definitions, we can notice the common goals of integration and active participation. However, there are also important differences between these two kinds of interculturalism. The most notable contrast is Québécois interculturalism's open protection of the Francophone culture. In this respect, interculturalism in Québec is closer to multiculturalism. Ted Cantle says

> The Canadian/Québec Province use of interculturalism (…) mirrors much of the reified, static and defensive form of identity management found in European forms of Multiculturalism, whereas the Canadian government form of "multiculturalism" is a little closer to the European idea of interculturalism. (2018:140)

Cantle considers Québécois interculturalism is closer to European forms of multiculturalism because protecting of the Francophone culture implies, in his opinion, a sort of essentialisation of the Québécois identity. In consequence, protecting an essentialist form of identity is also a feature of European multiculturalism. Conversely, Canadian multiculturalism's unwillingness to privilege the Francophone community places it closer to European interculturalism and its neutral approach. The criteria to judge what belongs to multiculturalism and what to interculturalism are diverse and they frequently overlap. The relations and differences between the two forms of interculturalism are intricate indeed, which does not help to draw clear boundaries in relation to other approaches like the multicultural one. The case of Québec interculturalism is a sort of hybrid. From one perspective, it assumes itself as a host society that has decided to push integration and interaction as its policy on diversity -interculturalism-, but at the same time, it is a national minority looking for the recognition and protection of their own Francophone culture -multiculturalism-.

> Because they themselves constitute a minority, Québec Francophones instinctively fear forms of socio-cultural fragmentation, marginalisation and ghettoisation likely to weaken the nation. This accounts for the particular emphasis that Québec interculturalism places on integration. (Bouchard, 2018:94)

Because its peculiar position, it is understandable Québec tries to benefit from features of both approaches at different levels. This possibility of combining features from both theories denotes they are not *essentially* different. In fact, scholars such as Tariq Modood argued that the differences between multiculturalism

and interculturalism are not substantial. Consequently, 'Bouchard does not distinguish IC-Q [Québec Interculturalism] from MC [Multiculturalism] at a conceptual level.' (2015:353) On the other hand, Charles Taylor, who is acknowledged as a key figure in both theories, asserts there is no significant variation between intercultural and multicultural policies, the difference between the two approaches is more a matter of emphasis: multiculturalism places an emphasis on political recognition, and interculturalism underlines integration as well as stressing dialogue.

In Québec, being both a host society for immigrants and a national minority, integration is a more complex issue than in the rest of Canada (Taylor, 2012:417); in this case integration has to be based on Francophone culture in order to protect the host minority that perceives itself as at risk. An external-internal distinction helps to understand better the complexities. Externally -in relation to the rest of Canada-, in order to support the aim of protecting the Francophone culture the arguments get closer to multiculturalism; internally -within the Québec province- intercultural ideas would also help to protect its culture by preventing social fragmentation. Another way to express this same idea in more specific terms is by referring to the hopes and fears driving Québec's interculturalism.

> The hopes connected with that are that people coming from outside will contribute new ideas, new skills, new insights which will enrich our society. The obverse of this expectation is the fear that somehow what are considered essential features of our identity will be lost. In the Quebec case, these essential features include, understandably, the French language. (…) But beyond the language and these basic principles, there is an indefinite zone of customs, common enthusiasms (hockey), common reference points, modes of humour, and so on, each cherished to varying degrees, and more by some than by others, whose weakening, abandonment or demise may be feared. The degree of acceptance of the intercultural story depends on the balance between these hopes and fears, and the public debate centres around them. (Taylor, 2012:419)

European interculturalism shares the same hopes, but not the same fears, at least not in the same way. In fact, it denounces the fear of losing *the essential features* of the Francophone culture as another failure inherited from the multicultural perspective and its advocacy on the majority-minority scheme. European interculturalism insists on a universal framework in which diversity should be embedded. From its standpoint, to acknowledge there is a majority culture which provides the societal foundation might easily lead to practices of assimilation. Similarly, to provide political recognition -group-differentiated rights- to minorities could lead to the ghettoisation of groups and moral relativism. Therefore, it tries to

dodge these issues by focusing on neutrality and intercultural dialogue. I will discuss each of these in turn

> Unlike assimilation, it [European interculturalism] recognises that public authorities must be impartial, rather than accepting a majority ethos only, if communalist tensions are to be avoided. Unlike multiculturalism, however, it vindicates a common core which leaves no room for moral relativism. Unlike both, it recognises a key role for the associational sphere of civic society where, premised on reciprocal recognition, intercultural dialogue can resolve the problems of daily life in a way that governments alone cannot. (Europe & Ministers, 2008:20)

According to the intercultural perspective, universal principles and impartiality of authorities are conditions fostering cultural diversity. Democracy, pluralism, inclusiveness, and equality amongst other liberal principles work as both source and limit for intercultural efforts. In that regard, even if interculturalism tries to move away from any sort of essentialist understanding of society, it shares the same general framework that supports other liberal approaches such as multiculturalism and civic nationalism. In other words, at least at the fundamental level, the intercultural society would be as liberal as the nationalist and multicultural societies it is trying to replace.

The tendency to underline the universality of principles places interculturalism in the group of liberal, cosmopolitan perspectives. It is quite challenging, to say the least, to explain how the same set of liberal principles make possible two antagonistic postures such as cosmopolitanism and nationalism.[67] The two forms of interculturalism also follow this bifurcation of the liberal base: Québécois interculturalism is nationalist; European interculturalism is cosmopolitan. The difference lies in how each of these approaches understands the implications of the liberal principles and the processes of liberalisation within societies. Cosmopolitanism emphasises that liberalisation and modernisation are progressively relegating the sense of national identity; while these processes take place, the members of communities would feel less and less attached to the parochial values and practices of their decreasingly ostracised communities, and closer to the 'universal' values shared by any liberal society. In contrast, liberal

[67] In Chapter 3 I described nationalism, but a brief definition of cosmopolitanism is useful. Thomas Pogge mentions that 'Three elements are shared by all cosmopolitan positions. First, *individualism*: the ultimate units of concern are human beings, or persons -rather than, say, family lines, tribes, ethnic, religious communities, nations, or states. (…) Second, *universality*: the status of ultimate unit of concern attaches to every living human being equally -not merely to some subset, such as men, aristocrats, Aryans, whites, or Muslims. Third, *generality*: this special status has global force. Persons are ultimate units of concern for everyone -not only for their compatriots, fellow religionist, or such like.' (1992:48-9)

nationalisms, including multicultural nationalism, believe that liberalisation is compatible with an increased sense of nationhood. (Kymlicka, 1995:88) The debate is interesting and of utmost importance[68]; I can set forward there are good reasons to believe that belonging to a societal culture is necessary for the construction of identity and, therefore, I believe that in this case, the multicultural nationalism is right.

It is true that European interculturalism and other cosmopolitan perspectives assert that a project such as multiculturalism is not truly liberal, and they do so by dissociating ethnic, racial and national consciousness from the liberal principles. Critiques of the illiberality of multiculturalism base an important part of their claims on the subordination of individual freedom to forms of collective identity, particularly ethnicity and nationality. In a mild version of this perspective, a liberal society could keep working as a nation but only if it does not go deeper in supporting or promoting ethnic or religious particularities. In other words, it is not possible to build a *truly* civic nation unless references to ethnicity are left behind. In this first approach, liberal citizenship can be national, but post-ethnic (Hollinger, 2005). In a more radical view of the same perspective, the global and fluid situation of societies in the new century imposes not only a post-ethnic take but a post-national model (Abizadeh, 2004). Therefore, multiculturalism or nationalism are considered illiberal because they overemphasise the cultural and ethnic features of minorities, jeopardising individual rights. But it could be also illiberal if it stands in the way liberalisation operates in the new century, that is, if it insists on using an old-fashioned national framework to make sense of fundamental social categories -identity, memory, way of life, power- that cannot be understood any longer in national terms (Beck, 2002).

As mentioned before, the claim of illiberality directed to the multicultural theory has been extensively debated, and almost fully discredited (Kymlicka, 1995, 2015; Parekh, 2002; Tully, 2002). European interculturalism tries to keep its distance from multiculturalism by digging deeper the opposition between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. However, despite the factual differences they have, they share the same liberal foundation. Both are liberal projects, with liberal principles and they focus on the freedoms and democratic rights of individuals. It is

[68] I apologise for not devoting some more time and effort to clarify further a 'typology of liberalism', specifying at least the major connections and discrepancies between national liberalism, universal liberalism and plural liberalism, which are the kind of liberal forms relevant for my argument. I hope my discussion on the wide range of liberal theories -multiculturalism, interculturalism, communitarianism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism- is enough to at least have a basic notion of the connections and disjunctions.

becoming increasingly clearer that the intercultural approach does not propose a radically different foundation. However, interculturalism still can claim to be different because of its focus on intercultural dialogue and its adequacy to deal with super-diversity in a globalised world, which is what I analyse next.

6.2 Intercultural spaces and cosmopolitan cohesion

A central concept of interculturalism as a socio-political project on diversity and plurality in modern democracies is that of intercultural dialogue. From the public policy perspective, more clearly in the case of European interculturalism but easily extended to Québec, there are at least five crucial recommendations to achieve the conditions needed for intercultural dialogue: democratic governance of cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and participation, learning and teaching intercultural competences, spaces for intercultural dialogue, and intercultural dialogue in international relations (Europe & Ministers, 2008). The directive on spaces for intercultural dialogue is surely the most distinctive one of the turn intended by this conceptualisation, as the other four are shared by almost any other liberal pluralist perspective, even if they do not use the adjective 'intercultural'. Democratic governance, citizenship-participation, teaching diversity competencies, and dialogue between communities are policy pillars in all liberal pluralist approaches. Therefore, I focus here on the spaces for intercultural dialogue.

The basic idea behind the spaces for intercultural action is that interaction, communication, and intercultural dialogue take place in public places. Intercultural policies are particularly concerned with developing spaces in a way that promote mixing, desegregation and interaction amongst members of different communities. In consequence, '…the policy question arises: what kind of forums, spaces and networks should be created and supported to stimulate inter-relationships of newcomers and settled communities?' (Vertovec, 2006:30) The Intercultural Cities Programme (Europe, 2010), which is in the vanguard of intercultural projects in Europe, exemplifies the aim of creating spaces for positive interaction. Processes such as *intercultural place-making*, look for the '…creation of spaces which make it attractive for people of different backgrounds to encounter others, and to minimise avoidance, apprehension or xenophobia.' (Guidikova, 2014:6) In the case of Québec, Gagnon and Iacovino (2007) express their support for interculturalism based on notions of public space and identity. In practical terms, a conception of

space is the point of departure for the intercultural theory. The key feature of interculturalism is cross-cultural dialogue, but this is not possible without a suitable space to carry it out. In more detail, interculturalism

> …promotes contact zones among people who share certain characteristics (reinforcing bonds) and facilitates relations between individuals from different backgrounds (building bridges), such as when it promotes interaction between people across different religions, languages and so on… (Zapata-Barrero, 2018:57)

A discussion of particular policies is beyond the scope of my thesis. Instead, I try to discern the implications and assumptions behind the aim of the policies, depicting what I consider to be the core of the intercultural project. It seems, for instance, that the interaction promoted by the intercultural approach should be of a very particular kind, of a nature that allows individuals to build their identity flowing freely through different configurations, almost as if it were something constructed purely as a matter of will or, at least, pragmatically adjustable. As cited in (Grillo, 2018:111), Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, member of the Council of Europe, affirmed that interculturalism

> …shifts the focus from the relationship between the individual or community and the state to the necessity for dialogue across communal barriers. It is also marked by a culture of broad-mindedness, which recognises the fluidity of identities and the need for openness to change in a globalising context.

The rigidity resulting from embedding individuals in groups could hinder the fluidity required for intercultural interaction. Québec Interculturalism also aims to '…strik[e] a balance in intercultural dynamics between fluidity and identities and boundaries (recognising difference is necessary, enclosing it in boxes is wrong).' (Bouchard, 2013:102) Consequentially, categories, attributes and group markers are not required or useful for pushing forward the intercultural theory. Instead,

> It incorporates all people (without exception, including nationals), without any view of society based on group and ethnic division. For IC, difference is based on various categories of diversity that are not necessarily linked to ethnicity, nationality or even race…' (Zapata-Barrero, 2018:58)

Although it is not easy to see what those categories Zapata-Barrero refers would be. Rather, it seems more a call for considering individuals without further reference to any category.

While diversity is generally seen as inherent in individuals, there is a difference. Here it is individual's competencies -e.g. to avoid discrimination, develop sensitivity to characteristics of others or foster communication-, rather than their group memberships, which matter. 'Correspondingly, there is a semantic shift from

the recognition of collective identities to that of individual competences. This facilitates a connection both to the individualization discourse and to notions of individual entrepreneurial spirit.' (Faist, 2009:177) I will further develop the consequences of this idea in the next sections, where I form the second part of this argument. For the moment, it is enough to assert that the emphasis on building positive spaces for interaction entails the rejection of preconceived categorisations of diversity. In the context of interculturalism, dismissing collective categories aligns with liberal notions of individual autonomy.

Just as interculturalism's pursuit of a flexible identity pushes it towards avoiding the rigid categorisation of individuals, the specific challenges it attempts to overcome also shape its approach. According to Zapata-Barrero, there are three strategies that interculturalism pushes forward: positive interaction, anti-discrimination and diversity advantage (2018:63-65). These proposals try to overcome the main issues associated with diversity in modern societies. He mentions that in the social realm the challenges include segregation, exclusion, and reduction of social capital. In consequence, the three strategies mentioned above look to improve social cohesion through equality policies. The same occurs in the political domain, where the problems include instability and lack of citizens' loyalty, both caused by changes in traditional values and relations. In this case, interculturalism would propose to keep control over those changes in the values, always considering the stability and loyalty of citizens (Zapata-Barrero, 2018:64-65), which does not seem a move so different than the integrationist perspective it tries to avoid.

Behind the policies, proposals and problems, we can find the ethos justifying the efforts: the pursuit of social cohesion and stability.[69] Interculturalism proposes to achieve them through positive contact of individuals, but in essence, they are not different problems to those troubling nationalism, multiculturalism and the other liberal theories of diversity. Even more important, because they are essentially the same problems, in the same liberal framework and with the same emphasis on policies, norms and institutional design, the output is unavoidably similar.

[69] Cantle describes this searching for social cohesion and stability mostly in the case of the UK, referring to the concept and programs of community cohesion. (Cantle, 2001, 2008) However, he tries to generalise it as a new framework for diverse societies. He says, '…, it should be noted that community cohesion programmes in the UK at least, have largely been conceptualised and implemented on a localised and contextualised basis. A new paradigm, or metanarrative, of interculturalism would develop a new national and international perspective to both support and facilitate cohesion.' (Cantle, 2012:88)

Another important postulate undergirds the intercultural approach: the kind of social glue and identity its proponents advocate. If the ethos of the issues is social cohesion and political stability, then we cannot avoid questions about what should bring and keep people together, and what kind of identity would fulfil those requirements. Cantle identifies the social glue as 'community cohesion' (2008). In this case, social cohesion is not extended beyond the limits of reducing prejudice amongst the members of different groups, and it is based on Gordon Allport's contact theory (1954).[70] This perspective moves the sources of conflict away from structural conditions and places them in individual and collective prejudice, which gives me the chance to clarify something important. It is not the case that intercultural spaces, interaction and dialogue aim to improve recognition; nor is it is the case they move recognition from collective differences to individual attributes. Instead, they function in a negative way, wherein reducing prejudice and improving everyday interaction is more important than a direct and positive recognition of people's identity, which is always attached to their group memberships. Groups benefit through contact in that they become less prejudiced and build more positive relationships.

The context of globalisation would set the premises for the new social glue in a world where there is no more need of myths on common origins, traditions, ethnicity, race or religion to build an identity; a world in which interaction would be enough. In other words, in the globalised world, identity should reflect the fact that the dominant role of groups in shaping identity is being eroded. 'It is not just migration that makes global citizenship necessary. The autonomy of the nation-state and its ability to protect its citizens against outside influences are declining.' (Castles, 2000:131-132) This global citizenship requires '…the development of common bonds on the basis of a more universal conception of humankind,' (Cantle, 2012:143).

In consequence, interculturalism is a perspective that step by step gets closer to what is referred as *Cultural Cosmopolitanism,* which in its mild version

> …acknowledge[s] the importance of (at least some kinds of) cultural attachments for the good human life (at least within certain limits), while denying that this implies that a person's cultural identity should be defined by any bounded or homogeneous subset of the cultural resources available in the world.' (Kleingeld & Brown, 2014).

The intercultural form of identity is cosmopolitan in nature (Modood,

[70] A detailed account on how the contact theory would work in the context of intercultural relations is provided by (Cantle, 2012:145-152)

2015:349), and intercultural cohesion is the result of the normalisation of diversity within the context of cosmopolitan spaces (Nava, 2007). Likewise, the particular skills and competences that should be developed by modern citizens to achieve positive interactions are cosmopolitan.

The features mentioned above relate to and support each other. In the intercultural perspective, fostering skills for positive interaction, avoiding categorisation, reducing prejudice, knowing 'the other', and building a fluid identity are features expressing a) the current situation of globalisation, b) an adequate identity for it in the form of cultural cosmopolitanism, and c) the basic challenge to achieve social cohesion.

> Cosmopolitan practices and skills are related to the adoption of cultural skills that facilitate communication and interaction with others, a phenomenon also described as "multiple cultural competence" (…) Cosmopolitan practices refer more specifically to interactions across cultural differences. Such multiple cultural competences are especially relevant when it comes to transactions between traders and customers, and I therefore describe this phenomenon as 'corner-shop cosmopolitanism'. It takes place locally, and is characterized by the versatile intercultural skills of those involved in transactions. (Wessendorf, 2014:68)

If we step back, it is possible to see the general framework that provides the unity amongst the cosmopolitan practices and competences: modern liberalism, the very same framework that facilitated the alternative approach that interculturalism now wants to avoid. Take one step forward, and we can perceive that interculturalism comes to deal with similar assumptions about social cohesion, identity and sources of diversity in the context of modern liberalism. There are indeed slight differences between the intercultural and the multicultural perspectives, but they cannot be understood as opposed. Cantle's perspective perhaps is the most accurate about the relation between them. Nationalism in general, and multicultural nationalism in particular, as with global cosmopolitanism, are responses to the modern issues that do differ but are not opposed.

> The response to globalisation and super diversity has generally been one of trying to reassert nationalistic concepts of identity and to strengthen national solidarity, with the credibility and influence of the political elite very much at stake. This has been understandable, and will no doubt continue while the nation-state is regarded as the only viable instrument of a political community. But the opposite is also needed –to prepare for the future of increasingly globalised identities– and not simply prop up a past conception of ourselves which will be increasingly subject to pressure and change in a globalised world. Globalised and national identities are not opposed and should be regarded as complementary. (Cantle, 2012:171)

There is one more point I want to develop further in order to assess

interculturalism and its relation with other theories of diversity and plurality: a form of super-diversity produced by the process of globalisation that demands a different approach than those of multiculturalism and nationalism. 'Globalisation has created an era of "super-diversity" in which most Western societies have become far more dynamic and complex.' (Cantle, 2013) This complexity would differentiate and justify the intercultural project.

6.3 Globalisation, super-diversity and social allegiance

European interculturalism and recent forms of cosmopolitanism, generally advocate the idea that globalisation brought a qualitative change in contemporary diversity; a new form known as *super-diversity* that has made the allegiance to local groups and communities obsolete. Underlying the process of globalisation is an assumption that in our current historical situation, identity no longer needs any reference to a myth of common origin, tradition or ethnicity. This *liberation* from the constraints of particular forms of organising life is essential to support cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. 'If this possibility is to be consolidated, each citizen of a state must learn to become a cosmopolitan citizen -a person capable of mediating between national traditions, communities and alternative forms of life.' (Held, 1999:44) In fact, the process of globalisation has allowed and supported critical views of otherwise strong theoretical approaches such as liberal nationalism.

The bonds between individuals in the global cosmopolitan framework, if any, are built using an idea of generic humankind that denies the need of any parochial attachment. Super-diversity is a sort of *unstructured* diversity in which *new migration* has brought '…a transformative "diversification of diversity" not just in terms of ethnicities and countries of origin, but also with respect to a variety of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live.' (Vertovec, 2006:1) Therefore, if we concede that super-diversity and globalisation represent a qualitative change in the forms of contemporary plurality, then cosmopolitan approaches such as European interculturalism seems to be the suitable way to address the new issues on diversity.

Globalisation and cosmopolitanism are so closely related that what we call cosmopolitanisation is nothing but an internalisation of the process of globalisation (Beck, 2002). Additionally, the process of cosmopolitanisation is considered an expression of the progressive process towards more liberal societies. In this century

of a globalised world, the process of liberalisation emphasising individual rights and principles would find its way through the cosmopolitan approaches. The process of globalisation is too broad a phenomenon to be covered here. In consequence, for the purposes of my argument, I focus only on the idea of a qualitative change in modern diversity and if this is enough to claim that individuals in western societies can build their identity without a strong attachment to collective identities.

The idea of super-diversity is closely tied to migration waves happening in the last decades. The fact of massive migration results in what Stephen Castles refer as the first hypothesis of global migration: 'The world is entering a new phase of mass population moments, in which migration to Europe and the situation of ethnic minorities in Europe can be fully understood only in a global context.' (2000:79) He also mentions that the new migration corresponds with the restructuring of the economy and labour markets during the last years, as well as, new characteristics of migrants -polarisation of skills and qualifications-, and new forms of migration -family migration and refugee movements instead guest-worker systems-. The evidence to support these claims is quite strong. However, the consequence of these well-documented changes is not necessarily accurately understood in relation to the collective identity of communities.

The economic way of organising the world has changed, as have modes of migration and policies and laws; nonetheless, the way we build identity does not seem to be *qualitatively* different from what happened before. There are differences indeed, for instance, greater reflexivity is required to navigate within globalised conditions of rapid change and increased choice. However, if we correctly grasp the core of the proposition, we would realise that super-diversity, new migration and globalisation are not fostering a *change* in traditional forms of collective identity, but an alternative form of identity in which strong collective allegiance is not necessary. In other words, super-diversity is neither supplanting collective identities nor competing with them. Actually, they do not contradict each other.

Cosmopolitanism suggests, we should focus on individual identity and leave behind the restrictive, fixed categories that are nothing but old-fashioned attachments. 'Nussbaum and other extreme cosmopolitans, and to a lesser extent many of the moderates, present cosmopolitanism first and foremost as a kind of virtuous deracination, a liberation from the possibly illegitimate, and in any case blinkering, attachments of locality, ethnicity, religion, and nationality.' (Calhoun, 2003:544)

Super-diversity tries to advocate an autonomous and personal understanding of our identity. In the new global context, the emphasis is on the particular circumstance of every individual and not on the situation of the group or community. As I mentioned before, the core assumption of super-diversity is that collectivities are not genuine social actors. 'For theorists seeking to draw broad brush pictures of global social change, globalization is linked to the social process of individualization, although the mechanisms remain sketchy.' (Jamieson, 2013:214) Agency in the globalised world is concentrated in the individual. In this case, globalisation pushes to the individualisation, and individualisation in a liberal context suits cosmopolitanism.

There are two notions we can mention to challenge the core assumption of super-diversity: first, we could dispute the notion that collective categories are not appropriate conceptual tools to understand diversity in the global context; or second, we could affirm that individuals still develop strong attachments to particular groups or communities.[71] In the first sense, we usually find premises such as

> We believe that this super-diversity presents a fundamental challenge to the way we categorise people. And if the groupings that we often use (black, Christian, gay, and so on) to identify people who are disadvantaged or being discriminated against are not sound, then the whole process of promoting equality is undermined. (Fanshawe & Dhananjayan, 2010:11)

A common claim is that traditional categories for labelling difference, in the context of super-diversity, are not enough, which might be true. However, this does not imply a qualitative change in the nature of identity or the way we construct it, therefore, the attachments to groups are as necessary as always. Globalisation does not inevitably entail a straightforward form of individualisation. Relations with others are still of great importance. The individualisation thesis, which is at the core of the cosmopolitan argument, is more complex than scholars believed in the first place. In Chapter 8 I introduce the distinction between self-sufficiency and completeness in constructing our identity, which clarifies what I affirm here. We can concede that traditional categories such as

> 'National identity' does not therefore coincide with an affinity or emotional attachment to the state in which people happen to reside, except perhaps

[71] The way I understand this strong attachment to particular groups and communities is significantly different from the usual idea of attachment to a collective identity. I think of this attachment as an ontological feature of our being, and not only as a perception of belonging. For instance, the attachment is equally present in an individual that feels it belongs to a particular nation-state, as in an individual that does not feel that belonging, as long as they share the same horizon from which they make sense of their own existence. I develop this idea further in Chapter 8.

> in the case of coherent nation-states, with clear borders and relatively homogeneous populations. Such states are clearly becoming fewer in number as patterns of migration impact on all continents.' (Cantle, 2012:25)

Again, at least in the way and level I refer to it, identity is not just a matter of affinity or preference, not mainly an emotional attachment. Identity is more than belonging. Our identity is our being. The new form of diversity, derived by the processes of globalisation, judges identity using the same framework as other liberal approaches. This tendency is understandable because identity has been traditionally linked to important concepts in the political realm, particularly social cohesion and solidarity. In political models such as nationalism, there is the opinion of promoting ways of belonging would be enough to develop a sense of shared identity. However, promoting ways of belonging is not the same that promoting ways of being, of being together.

As said above, in the intercultural paradigm, bonding is also the way to secure social cohesion and solidarity, but in contrast to the nationalist approach, it is achieved through mutual understanding. In consequence, there is no need for a particular and shared identity. However, despite the innovative perspective interculturalism brings to the debate, we should not advocate weaker roles for identity. Completely the opposite, we have to link diversity with a stronger idea of identity and recognition. If we are interested, not in the political features to secure cohesion and solidarity, but in the factual way we construct our identity, then categories and collectivities are still significant.

At this moment it is useful to bring into play the second thought I mentioned before: the strong attachment to groups and communities which remains, despite the globalisation process, as a necessary feature of identity construction. This is not a new debate. We find ourselves again in front of two opposed forms of understanding the bonds between individuals; an opposition that brings us back to the debate between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism. Of their several disagreements, I focus on one central dispute: the necessity of allegiance to particular groups or communities in the process of identity construction.

Cosmopolitan approaches emphasising a qualitative change derived from migration such as super-diversity clearly advocate the idea that traditional forms of identity, such as national identity are on the decline.

> Castells (1997/2010) supports the view that the state has been bypassed by networks of wealth, power and information and lost much of its sovereignty. Barber (2013) agrees and believes that nation-states might be replaced by cities as the main instrument of the polity because they

> are more capable of responding to cross-border challenges than states.[72] (Cantle, 2013)

Even if mild cosmopolitanisms do not suggest national identity should be downplayed, they take this decline as evidence of the inessential nature of bonds between individuals and communities 'The same -if the cosmopolitan alternative can be sustained- is true for immersion in the culture of a particular community. Such immersion may be something that particular people like and enjoy. But they no longer can claim that it is something that they need.' (Waldron, 1992:762) Therefore, the dispute between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism can be schematically summed up in trying to find at least one attachment that cannot be denied. 'Perhaps we are able to reexamine some attachments, but the problem for liberalism arises if there are others so fundamental to our identity that they cannot be set aside and that any attempt to do so will result in serious and perhaps irreparable psychological damage.' (Daniel Bell, 2016)

In contrast, there are perspectives supporting people's legitimate expectations to have access and remain bonded to their culture, for instance, multiculturalism and civic nationalism; and at the same time, they endorse a process of liberalisation. In times of globalisation, collective identity can simultaneously become stronger and follow the processes of liberalisation. Kymlicka, taking Québec as an example, affirms that both tendencies are happening in the same historical process: communities that are liberalising their members at the same time still value their membership in the community. 'Far from displacing national identity, liberalization has in fact gone hand in hand with an increased sense of nationhood.' (1995:88) In fact, this convergence of liberalisation processes and nationalist allegiances is nothing unexpected as, at the end of the day, it is completely possible to have liberal nationalisms.

I believe the puzzle does not vanish by finding an attachment that cannot be denied without irrevocably harming the construction of identity. Indeed no *singular* attachment, no matter how important, can be said to be ingrained in our identity. Similarly, we cannot deny the *importance* of attachments because some people are *choosing* to move away from traditional ways of life. On the contrary, we have to assert the articulation of almost countless attachments as the core of our identity, including both, the chosen and unchosen ones. The attachments do not necessarily need to be positive or conscious to be part of our being, in other words, they are not

[72] The references mentioned by Cantle in this quote are Castells' *The Power of Identity*

necessarily chosen. I will argue this point in Chapter 8.

Our identity is a whole. In consequence, even if we do not feel a link to certain aspects or features of a group, it does not mean we are not related to them or under their influence. Scholars such as Kymlicka (1995), Taylor (1994) or Tamir (1993) are right in believing the main reason people keep and foster attachments is because this allows them to make sense of their world. However, it is not so clear they could accept that what helps us to make sense of the world cannot be reduced to what we consciously and openly accept, but it also includes that other universe of issues, ideas and notions which with we engage in a dialectical struggle. Directly, by contrast, or as an open opposition, collective identities are necessary to make sense of what we are.

> It would be a grave mistake to underestimate the weight or deny the legitimacy of collective identities. It is often said, and rightly so, that they are arbitrarily constructed or even invented, but that does not prevent them from being lived as profoundly authentic by the large majority of individuals who need them to make sense of their life and to ground themselves. Finally, they come to acquire a level of substance that keeps them from being entirely arbitrary or artificial. Largely driven by emotion, they arouse suspicion the consummate rationalists. And like all myths that they feed on, they partake in a universal mechanism that is acting in the history of all societies and weighs strongly on the direction of their future. Unpredictable and irrepressible, they can be linked both to the most noble and the most vile endeavours. In any case, they fulfil an essential function of unification, stabilization, and mobilization. (Bouchard, 2011:456-57)

6.4 The intercultural assessment of multiculturalism

As I said above, in general terms intercultural policies claim to address the issues multiculturalism generates and/or cannot solve. These *general* issues include communal segregation, mutual incomprehension, undermining the rights of women, moral relativism, (Europe & Ministers, 2008:19-20); prevention of positive interaction, rigid categorisation of individuals, static identity, ethnic, racial and national substantialism (Zapata-Barrero, 2018); and reified notions of culture (A. Phillips, 2007) amongst the most important ones. Other problems brought up from the particular circumstances of the Québécois and European contexts, include the non-recognition of a majority culture and non-protection of a national language in Québec (Bouchard, 2011), and its obsolete structure for the context of super-diversity in Europe (Guidikova, 2018). These more particular critiques are not

(2010 [1997]) and Barber's *If Mayors Ruled the World* (2014).

shared between both forms of interculturalism, but they complete a sketch of issues scholars claim interculturalism can confront.

In *Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: debating the dividing lines* (2018a), Nasar Meer, Tariq Modood and Ricard Zapata-Barrero have made the most recent effort to draw the coincidences and divergences between multiculturalism and interculturalism in the clearest possible way. They affirm that both approaches: a) consider cultural pluralism an asset, b) oppose assimilationist and liberal perspectives that do not take into account culture and identity, and c) both try to achieve equal treatment through the inclusion of cultural difference. On the other hand, they contest on i) the status of dialogue and interpersonal relations, ii) the role of the majority-minority scheme, iii) the significance of recognising groups in addition to individual citizenship, and iv) the status of minority religious communities and organisations. (Meer, Modood, & Zapata-Barrero, 2018b:9).

I consider it a fair account that sums up the complex relationship between the theories. However, if I might claim a modest contribution to this issue, it can be found in my effort to place some assumptions that demand further debate from an ontological perspective, such as super-diversity and social allegiance, under the spotlight.

In the intercultural approach, diversity from national minorities or indigenous peoples is not taken into account, or if it does, it does not require any particular change or adaptation to deal with them. It does not emphasise the injustices suffered by minorities in contrast to mainstream society; indeed, any kind of discrimination seems to be reduced to an instance of ignorance directed to individuals. Furthermore, it is not eager to recognise any sort of cultural, ethnic or religious collectivity as a social actor. Despite Ted Cantle's claim that interculturalism is inaccurate when it downplays economic disparities as an important factor in discrimination (2012:61-62), there is clear stress on prejudice and ignorance as principal sources of conflicts between communities. In consequence, there is a prioritisation of individual solutions over collective ones.[73]

As I mentioned above, on fundamental issues, interculturalism is closer to individualistic perspectives such as cosmopolitanism than it is to communitarian perspectives. Correspondingly, this difference in understanding diversity as based

[73] As Cantle mentions, poverty alone is not responsible for conflicts between communities. Racism is not attributable to poverty. Prejudice and discrimination do not always have an economic origin, and instead they have socio-psychological roots. However, it is important not to jump straight to the opposite conclusion and to assume there are no structural issues

on the individuals and not groups explains the disagreements mentioned by Meer, Modood and Zapata-Barrero. The assumption underlying super-diversity is that the *plurality of affiliations* of every individual renders ethnic collectivities – or any group- impotent as social actors. In this case, diversity pushes towards individualisation, and individualisation in liberal context better suits notions of cosmopolitanism.

Behind the struggles to differentiate multiculturalism and interculturalism, there is something deeper than an incidental inability to draw clear attributes and goals. For that reason, it is important to find the cause for this dissonance between the claims and the stands, between the direct criticism of multiculturalism and the failure of interculturalism in building a radically distinctive alternative. In the first place, we have to assume that interculturalism holds the legitimate aim of supporting diversity and improving pluralist theories in western democracies. It is not a post-multicultural perspective of the same nature as right-wing stands, but a positive effort toward inclusiveness.

It is clear that interculturalism and multiculturalism share a common ground; both are pluralist theories in liberal contexts. In Taylor's opinion, the only difference is in the level of the 'over-all story of what they are trying to do.' (2012:492) It is a matter of emphasis. Multiculturalism places emphasis on recognition,[74] interculturalism on integration. '…one possible semantic distinction between the "multi-" and the "inter-" was that, within the dual goal of recognizing difference and achieving integration, "inter" places a greater emphasis on the latter.' (2012:417) Bouchard would go further and assert that, despite the common ground, they are diverse forms of liberal pluralism representing different paradigms: multiculturalism refers to a paradigm of diversity not recognising a majority culture; meanwhile, interculturalism denotes a duality paradigm in which the majority is equally important. (2018:93) However, despite the tone, the coincidences of both approaches are the rule and not the exception.

We can perceive that interculturalism reuses criticism made from different 'post' and 'anti' multicultural perspectives, such as claims of illiberality and

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contributing to cultural conflicts.

[74] In the case of Taylor's multiculturalism, the concept of recognition moves between the ontological dimension of dialogical construction of identity and particular group-differentiated rights adopted especially in Canada. Throughout the text I have denounced the multicultural *overemphasis* on political recognition, but in this case it should not be mistaken for the emphasis on recognition that Taylor mentions as characteristic of multiculturalism. In this case, recognition refers simply to acknowledging the cultural difference of cultural collectivities and their ability to work as legitimate social actors.

essentialisation of groups,[75] but tries at the same time to keep an identical liberal framework to provide a positive perspective on diversity. To summarise, there is something very suspicious about a theory that claims to bring a completely different approach to modern diversity, but in the end, has a very similar output to the old-fashioned approach that it was supposed to replace. Perhaps there is no more space within this paradigm to move forward to more radical ways of plural life. In consequence, we have to consider a more fundamental solution.

6.5 Conclusions

The particular proposals that interculturalism has for public space can be criticised in different ways, from being not different enough to the multicultural ones to underestimating the complex ways power shapes the tensions between groups and individuals. However, the aim behind them is to deal with a fundamental unsolved issue: the lack of positive relations between members of different ethnic, religious and ideological communities. Let me be particularly clear about this because here is where I found the support for the first part of my argument. The criticism of the lack of positive intercultural dialogue is valid. It denotes a social phenomenon present in modern societies, despite the best efforts of pluralist approaches to tackle it. This is not to deny the steps forward that projects such as multiculturalism have made in pursuing more cohesive and interactive diverse societies, it is simply an acknowledgement of the long way we still have ahead.

Even if I have not presented an exhaustive description of interculturalism, it seems enough for advancing my argument. Beyond the debates on interculturalism replacing multiculturalism, promising to succeed where the latter has failed before, the problems providing the fuel to the intercultural narrative are enough evidence that more work on the issue of diversity and recognition has to be done. It is not a matter of whether multiculturalism is no longer adequate as an approach to cultural diversity, or if it has to be complemented by an intercultural perspective. The criticism -sometimes unfairly directed to multiculturalism- shows clearly that there are issues beyond its reach, at least in its current liberal configuration. Can we conceive of some kind of multiculturalism that is not necessarily liberal? Perhaps, at

[75] An account of these claims of illiberality and essentialism from ‘anti’ and ‘post’ multicultural perspectives can be seen in (Kymlicka, 2015), The same claims from the perspective of interculturalism are available in (Meer & Modood, 2018).

least one that is less close to the institutional side and closer to more meaningful engagement between individuals and communities.[76] On the other hand, we can be sure that the difficulties in diverse societies are not the result of accommodating and integrating minority groups, as well as recognising them as units and legitimate social actors, as interculturalism suggests. Even if it is an interesting phenomenon to witness multiculturalism being blamed for what it tries to fight, we cannot believe the segregation of minorities or the enforcement of cultural stereotypes is caused by multiculturalism when it is actually a strategy to fight them (Kymlicka, 2015).

Multiculturalism, in the same way as other liberal perspectives, is a strategy that falls short because of its emphasis on the political aspects when the problems demand more fundamental solutions on other levels. The issues of diversity we can mention do not persist because multiculturalism is wrong, but because it is limited. Interculturalism does help to point out some of these important issues. A different matter is whether it can actually replace multiculturalism; so far, it is not even clear that its key features -communicative and interactive- are in fact missing in the multicultural project (Meer & Modood, 2018). Interculturalism does not solve the limitations of multiculturalism. Again, a little more development is needed to achieve the conclusion that interculturalism also falls short on addressing most of the issues it claims to tackle.

[76] In the next chapter I describe further what a more meaningful engagement might look like.

Chapter 7

From reciprocity to relativism: some difficulties of liberal diversity

In this chapter, I analyse further the nuances of the intercultural proposal. I focus my argumentation on the issues of strong identity and recognition. To keep the same distinction used before, I separately consider European and Québec interculturalism to convey the particular reasons for each case, but I am going to suggest that neither European nor Québécois interculturalism leads to the kind of strong identity and recognition I propose in this text.[77]

In Québécois interculturalism's conceptions of identity and recognition strongly resemble their counterparts in multicultural theory. The only relevant difference here is the emphasis on a principle of *reciprocity* delineated by Bouchard (2011), in which minority recognition should be necessarily mirrored by majority recognition. He affirms that '…interculturalism is sensitive to the problems and needs of the majority culture and the challenge of reconciling majority and minority rights and expectations. Multiculturalism does not show these concerns, once again because it does not recognise the existence of the duality.' (2018:96-97) Through the first three sections, I outline a path from the principle of reciprocity to the majority's worries of not benefiting equally from policies as their minority

[77] A clarification is needed here. Québec interculturalism tries to provide recognition to the Francophone culture, that is the whole aim of the project, at least from the socio-political perspective, but it does not extend this aim to minorities within Québec. In other words, Québec interculturalism does not provide recognition *in general.* It is quite interesting to see the way in which the same social recognition demanded in respect to the larger Canadian society is denied to the minority groups within the Québécois society. But it is even more interesting to see how, the same reasons and fears of lacking cohesion and social fragmentation are used to reduce minority recognition within Québec to the dimension of the political. In other words, Quebéc tries to protect their monopoly of recognition by the same means it does the larger multicultural Canadian society.

counterparts. In reality, however, the causality appears to flow in the opposite direction: these anxieties seem to trigger and existentially justify reciprocity and mutual adjustment. I pay particular attention to the idea of controlled interventionism as a sort of precedence that majorities can exercise under some circumstances; consequently, I examine the circumstances and criteria typically adducing such an idea.

In a nutshell, the principle of reciprocity allows mild interventionism so long as it has a liberal nature. With that in mind, I suggest that the anxieties of minorities and majorities are qualitatively different, and the troubles that legitimately worry minorities cannot always be mirrored by majority's concerns. Therefore, a fundamental asymmetry inheres in the idea of adjusted reciprocity. I push the consequences further and I maintain that, at least in regard to identity and recognition, adjusted reciprocity is neither justified nor feasible. The adjustments are pragmatic but identity cannot adjust pragmatically. In order to support this idea of identity, I sketch it as something more complex than just the beliefs and practices that we willingly accept or reject. Finally, I discuss some shortcomings with the idea of mutual adjustment through dialogue.

The last three parts of the chapter are devoted to further analysing European interculturalism. I define the reasons why it does not address strong forms of identity, and what implications this reluctance to grant recognition of social groups has. Driven by its liberal cosmopolitan nature, and a hard rejection of relativism and its possible consequences, European interculturalism aligns itself with a particular understanding of the concept of community that significantly restricts its scope. Subsequently, I focus on delineating two different notions of community: togetherness and likeness; I investigate the conditions which affirm that members of a community are living together in a meaningful way, drawing on the fears of relativism in the liberal tradition. Following this distinction, the claim of interculturalism to foster ways and spaces to live together acquires a different meaning, moving closer to likeness than togetherness. European interculturalism inverts the directionality and proposes universal values for grassroots and everyday interactions. I argue that contact theory does not provide neither a conceptual basis to say that we can truly live together nor social cohesion. Finally, I locate the source of interculturalism's tendency to universalism in a fear of relativism and its presupposed consequences. The fundamental question then becomes: Are we going to prevent relativism at diversity's expense?

7.1 Reciprocity and pragmatic accommodations

I have mentioned the particularities of Québec's circumstances which led interculturalists to look for the external and internal protection of the Francophone culture. We can call this a process of *double* protection. In relation to the larger Canadian society, the Francophone culture demands to be recognised as a minority in need of protection to preserve their identity. Responding to the minorities within the province, they advocate their own recognition as the host -majority- culture. In particular, this second designation as the host culture is intended to prevent any fragmentation of the Francophone society. In other words, Québec is protected from external pressures of the larger Canadian society that might jeopardise the continuity of Francophone culture and also protected internally by standing as the official culture and language of social cohesion and everyday business. As could be expected, the principle of reciprocity is ingrained in this double protection. Some problems of this approach will become visible as we more closely inspect the complexities of how the double *protection* is compatible with a reciprocal *recognition* between minorities and majorities.

My argument targets, not double protection itself, but its underlying understanding of recognition. In consequence, I do not venture to demonstrate if reciprocity and double recognition do or do not justify the Québec double protection; for my present purposes, it is enough to unveil some misunderstandings of the *adjusted* recognition assumed by the intercultural theory. In order to provide evidence for my claim, I start by referring to Bouchard's understanding of the way reciprocity and recognition support this double protection of Québec's Francophone culture.

> Part of the answer to this criticism [interventionism of the majority culture] lies in the principle of double recognition, already mentioned, and the reciprocity that it entails: cultural interventionism can be seen as a reasonable accommodation, this time in favour of the majority rather than minorities. Again, this arrangement is justified by the fact that the maintenance of the majority culture, by ensuring the reproduction of the symbolic foundation, will also serve the minorities. Here we are very much in the spirit of interculturalism, which advocates a logic of harmonisation through mutual adjustments. (2018:84)

The notion of reciprocity used in Québec interculturalism is conceived as the base for promoting harmonising practices, especially for reasonable accommodation and concerted adjustments.[78] We can affirm without much trouble that reciprocity

[78] The concept of reciprocity in Québec interculturalism is very close to the standard

can work when it is directed to actions and practices. In this vein, it seems to be a justified principle for dealing with the political aspects and everyday affairs of integration; under the right circumstances, I cannot see why reciprocity and intercultural harmonisation would not nurture the shared responsibility of majorities and minorities in processes of integration. Nevertheless, when it is a matter of identity recognition, this idea of reciprocity emphasising harmonisation leads to other kinds of disparities and limits.

Identity, in the strict sense of the term, is not something open to negotiation or adjustments. I am aware there are robust bodies of work supporting notions of identity negotiation, fluidity of boundaries and others of the same nature, from Erving Goffman (1973) to Judith Butler (1999). For my present purpose, I beg the reader to let me briefly present a notion of identity needed to advance my argument. The following affirmations, differentiations and nuances will be justified in Chapter 8, suffice it to make some positive and negative assertions about identity. I do not argue that identity is fixed, cannot change, is not socially constructed, or is not dialogic or dialectically shaped. I say it is not open to negotiation or adjustments, ideas located in a pragmatic understanding of phenomena. In other words, in the sense I consider it, identity refers to what we are, as a whole. It is not a *resource* people can actually use or do. Behind this subtle difference there is more than just a linguistic or semantic premise. Just as Merleau-Ponty embarked on showing that it is misleading to say we *have* bodies, we *have* minds or we *have* selves, I will argue in Chapter 8 that it is misleading to say we *have* an identity, even worse to say we *have* multiple identities. Merleau-Ponty would say that it is better to say we *are* minds, selves and bodies, I similarly affirm it is better to say identity is nothing but what we *are*. To say it in technical philosophical terms: identity is neither a property nor a relation, but our being. The same thought applies to collective identity. Even when there is an evident link between what we do and what we are as communities and individuals, that is, between our practices and identity, the latter cannot be reduced to the first.

Identity is more complex than the practices and behaviours we endorse or reject. Negotiation and adaptation of particular practices are not of the same kind as

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meaning of the term. 'Reciprocity is a principle that demands of the parties that they show or demonstrate through their acts what they expect of others. For example, respect for others, open-mindedness, good faith and the ability to compromise are dispositions that we would like our interlocutors to display and that, consequently, we must also put into practice. Reciprocity is essential for the institution of a culture of dialogue that fosters the coordination of actions and the peaceful, concerted resolution of disputes.' (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:165)

recognition of communities' identity. Long story short, it is important to emphasise that dealing with the practices does not condition the recognition of individual or collective identity. The same way that banning specific practices does not *necessarily* destroy or significantly modify the identity of a community, allowing them does not imply its recognition. To return to the particular case I am describing, it is peculiar, to say the least, that in a socio-political endeavour seeking identity preservation, notions such as negotiation and mutual adjustments could be applied to the identity of the communities. The aim behind pluralist projects like Québec interculturalism is to preserve identities, in this case, the Francophone identity.

In Québec interculturalism, the same way multicultural theory anticipates, adjustments and accommodations are mostly dealt in the institutional sphere and at the political level. Both approaches work on the assumption that political endeavours should reflect and shape social life. And even if this is true in many respects, political accommodations are not influential enough to assume that they lead to modifications in or recognitions of identity. To say it properly, political adjustments and accommodations can reflect the mutual recognition -or the lack thereof- between two or more communities, however, they will not directly produce it.[79] This is not to say the political sphere has no influence on the social sphere or even the ontological; I am saying that in the particular case of identity, the political dimension always comes second.

Adjusted reciprocity in the Québécois interculturalism is pragmatic, not fundamental; it deals with practices, not with identities. It is true that every individual and every community changes over time, and we can interpret this as evidence of continual adjustments. However, individuals and communities also persist over time, and they do it because they are unable to change some aspects of themselves without feeling they are losing an important part of their identity, no matter what the pragmatic benefit could be. Pragmatic adjustments are possible as political negotiations only to the extent they do not reach that depth where identity as a whole remains. In other words, I cannot change myself in a way that I stop being who I am. Pragmatic adjustments are impossible in the realm of identity, which is not to say our identity does not change, what is impossible is to do so in a pragmatic manner. Furthermore, I am not saying that collective identity is a sort of substance

[79] It is because of this gap between the political and the social that approaches such as everyday multiculturalism or European interculturalism claim any top-down approach runs the risk of being out of touch with everyday, grassroots forms of diversity encounters and negotiations. (Hardy, 2017)

or essence, it does change, but at the slow rate of historical processes and only as an internal self-generated effect.

We have to be particularly careful not to mistake Québec's double protection for a symmetrical form of 'recognition', even if it were just the kind referred to as pragmatic harmonisation. It is not only that double protection does not rest on real recognition of the other, but it is not even symmetrical; a symmetrical relation would be indeed a more suitable way to address a significant amount of the underlying problems. Notwithstanding Bouchard's assertion that the majority-minority framework unavoidably leads to a dualistic perspective, this dualism is not symmetrical in the context of Québec interculturalism. It does distinguish between majorities and minorities, but then the protections are unequally directed to one of the groups: the provincial majority. To be clear, I am not denying minorities and majorities can engage in more or less balanced interactions, adjustments and adaptations in everyday life, as well as in the political realm; I am not denying a possible quasi-harmonisation of both sides of the dialectic.

Symmetry, understood as equal distribution of power, cannot prevail if the aim shifts to primarily protect the symbolic foundations of the host society, and only as a side effect would benefit to the minority groups. The double protection does not lead to an equal distribution of recognition if I am allowed to say it this way; or if we want to say it properly, it does not come from a real notion of equal recognition. Arguably this is a key to understanding the issues behind the sort of reciprocity implied in Québec interculturalism. Instead of pushing a symmetrical reciprocity on the basis of acknowledging others by reversing perspectives and judging from their point of view (Benhabib, 1992), intercultural reciprocity is mostly pragmatic and it implies mutual adjustments without any deeper engagement in understanding the other.

7.2 Interventionism and precedence

Problems of unbalance and asymmetry become evident when we spot that the concerns of Québec interculturalism gradually moves from securing the conditions for minorities to integrate successfully into the mainstream culture, to concerns about the necessity of defining criteria and settings limits to the possible abuse on the part of the majority, what Bouchard calls 'controlled majority interventionism' (2018:87). The solution proposed to the issue of controlled majority

interventionism is the same as in the multicultural project: majorities are less likely to abuse from their interventionism as long as they stay within the liberal framework.[80] Actually, this sort of interventionism is nothing but a form of liberalisation. 'Liberals need to think more deeply about how to promote the liberalization of societal cultures, and about the role of coercive and non-coercive third-party intervention in that process.' (Kymlicka, 1995:172)

However, even if this sounds plausible in many respects, a major paradox quickly emerges: it does not seem very liberal to *impose* liberalism on others. Nonetheless, liberals find themselves inconsistently justifying such impositions, despite their own awareness that by doing so they are following the letter but not the spirit of the law. In Québec interculturalism, this happens when they push the precedence of the Francophone culture as the societal context in which reciprocity and harmonisation *should* happen, instead of pursuing the harmonisation of different societal contexts. In the case of European interculturalism, it happens when they assume a cosmopolitan framework as precondition for the contact theory. And it happens also in liberal multiculturalism, which recognises that

> Liberals have no automatic right to impose their views on non-liberal national minorities. (…) Relations between national groups should be determined by dialogue. (Kymlicka, 1995:171)

> [and yet] 'The legitimacy of imposing liberal principles on illiberal national groups depends on a number of factors (…) Cases involving newly arriving immigrant groups are very different. In these cases, it is more legitimate to compel respect for liberal principles, (…) I do not think it is wrong for liberal states to insist that immigration entails accepting the legitimacy of state enforcement of liberal principles, so long as immigrants know this in advance, and none the less voluntarily choose to come. (1995:170)[81]

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[80] As far as I know, Bouchard does not directly acknowledge liberalism as criteria for preventing abuses of interventionism. However, he suggests it. The justification lies on the assumption that interventionism is not just a tool serving the majority, but also the minority. Additionally, controlled interventionism should happen in a context in which minorities can protect themselves against abuses by majorities, and this is more likely to be the case in the legal and political system of liberalism.

[81] This quotation, at least in the tone, resonates with old assimilationist ideas. It seems to suggest that if migration is voluntary, then the enforcement is legitimate, no matter its content. Let us try a though experiment. Instead of thinking the case of an individual or group moving to a western, liberal country. Let us imagine a western family moving to a non-liberal state where other kind of principles rule, perhaps strict hierarchical, and patriarchal principles. I am not sure that just because they are willingly aim to move there, their enforcement be legitimately justified. I do not see enough difference to claim that in the first case is an instance of integration and the second a case of assimilation. At least, it does not seem to be a qualitative difference. Anyhow, there is a gap between claiming immigrants should not disregard the principles and societal culture of the host society and claiming it can

Another problem of Québec interculturalism is related to the idea that internal protections of the Francophone societal culture make sense because they help to secure the cohesion of the extended community. To secure conditions such as a symbolic foundation, solidarity, fraternity and a sense of shared identity for holding members of society together is an unavoidable issue in any theory of diversity. However, the intercultural proposal on this fundamental issue seems to fall short. Securing the symbolic foundation for the larger society does not seem to lead to its cohesion.

Mutual harmonisation and *reciprocity* are terms adduced when it comes to calming majority anxieties appearing in increasingly diverse societies. Though they can be real anxieties, they do not always result in fair claims, at least not in a context in which majorities have tipped the scale in their favour by default. In Chapter 2, I portrayed similar stratagems from the perspective of 'race' but easily extended to ethnicity, class or gender, in which beneficiaries of systematic advantages place themselves in the role of victims. In fact, the anxieties of an advantaged group in relation to a disadvantaged one can be evidence that recognition is far from being achieved; they can be considered ways to maintain hegemony. This shows that, as in many other struggles for social justice, real recognition cannot happen if communities and groups enjoying advantages do not acknowledge their own privileged position. Recognition cannot come incidentally or derivatively from looking to protect themselves. In any case, Bouchard acknowledges the fear and anxieties from some members of the Francophone community as a legitimate concern in the case of Québec and, consequently, as a reason for advocating first the recognition and then the precedence of its majority culture.

> According to them [members of the Francophone majority] the [Bouchard-Taylor] Report granted a great deal to minorities and immigrants but very little to the majority –a forceful reminder that because francophone Quebec was also a minority, it too needed protections; so, there was a need for balance. The elements of ad hoc precedence are conceived in this spirit. (2011:454)[82]

This is an instance of the way relations are not consistently treated in Québec interculturalism. On the one hand, the notion that Francophone Québec is

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legitimately be enforced as long as migration is voluntary.

[82] In this quote Bouchard seems to revise an earlier position in which majority anxieties were not taken into account, however, it is more a matter of degree than a substantive correction. Reciprocity, precedence and harmonisation are notions included in the first version of Québec interculturalism.

entitled to protections comes from the fact it is a minority. On the other hand, the doubts are not directed to the Anglophone majority which can supposedly jeopardise its continuity, but to groups within Québec which, in so far as minorities, are in need of protections themselves. If the fear is that through the minority groups Anglophone Canada could overwhelm the Francophone culture, then the consequential step is not balancing the protections granted to those minority groups with privileges for the Francophone society, but to defend those same minority groups in order not to become means for the Anglophone hegemony.

Even granting that internally protecting the Francophone culture could *incidentally* benefit minorities, it is not enough to justify claiming it as the symbolic foundation in which diversity should root itself. The anxieties might be partially justified, but the solution is uneven. Reciprocity and internal protection might help to assist Québec in reproducing and extending its culture, which is a legitimate aim, but we should find a way of leaving behind the idea that we need a unified symbolic foundation to accommodate diversity and, consequently, trying to pick one over the other. Québec interculturalism, particularly Bouchard's approach, is caught in a false dilemma between encouraging the controlled interventionism that comes with the internal protection of the host community and the cultural neutrality of the social space. (Bouchard, 2018:87) However, some alternatives are possible, such as the one supported by European Interculturalism, or my own proposal of a more radical form of identity and its recognition.

The pursuit for internal protection of the host culture leads people to postulate its *ad hoc* precedence. Notions of reciprocity and *ad hoc* precedence are important to understand the framework and context of the discussion on Québec interculturalism. I present the reasons developed by Bouchard to support these concepts, and then briefly assess some of the criticism he has faced. He provides at least seven good reasons to support *ad hoc* precedence: 1) contextual precedence is based on seniority or history of a group, 2) elements of precedence can be found in all societies and they are unavoidable even in the most liberal ones, 3) it helps to harmonise reciprocity and to accommodate minorities, 4) the law recognises the value of antecedence, 5) majority groups can be diversity bastions in a globalised world that tends to homogenisation, 6) from the sociological perspective, identity, memory, belonging, and other shared reference points provide solidarity and cohesion, and, 7) from a pragmatic perspective, it can soothe majority anxieties and reduce hostility towards minority groups (Bouchard, 2011:451-455).

The notion of precedence is somewhat ambiguous. Precedence slides between two definitions: that of place -we have precedence because we were here first-, and simplicity - social cohesion is eased by a focus on majority needs and values. Reasons 1, 2, and 4 seems to be closer to the former meaning of precedence, while reasons 3, 5, 6 and 7 seem to adjust better to the latter. In order to avoid any kind of confusion, I consider precedence only in the second sense, that is, expressing the aim that the majority's culture should come first in order to secure a symbolic foundation.

Bouchard knows well precedence is not universally justifiable and must be carefully supported. It is true he asserts elements of precedence can be found in all societies, but this is not enough to acknowledge them as legitimate in all cases. Majority precedence is only possible as an *ad hoc* approach 'because it is out of the question to formalize or establish this idea as a general legal principle, which would lead to the creation of two classes of citizens.' (2011:451) The fact that precedence is stipulated as *ad hoc* obliges to justify it referring mostly to the particularities of every specific case. Separately or combined, the seven good reasons I have mentioned above are the basic support for precedence *in* Québec.

Scholars such as Tariq Modood (2015) have tried to find a solution to the tension between reciprocity and precedence. He suggests that Québec interculturalism is not necessarily wrong in looking to preserve the Francophone culture, but it loses its way when it tries to push the idea of an *ad hoc* precedence. In other words, liberal societies could support reciprocity without overemphasising precedence. Modood demonstrates that criteria such as seniority and history of a group are not exactly good reasons for supporting precedence (2015). From his perspective, the possible abuses of minorities by majorities would be prevented or reduced by a dialogic process of identity construction and the inclusion of minorities in the national culture. He says, 'It is a story in which the white or ethnic majority is central but it is a developing story, and one in which new minorities too are characters and not just replicas of the majority or mere "add-ons".' (2015:361) His proposal of dialogic identity construction and reciprocity is further analysed in the next section but, even if Modood introduces an important distinction between dialogic construction and precedence, helping to release part of the moral burden trapped in the notion of a majority culture, the main problems persist.

Despite Modood's effort, it is not clear if we can have reciprocity without precedence in western societies, that is, we do not know if *in the liberal context*

reciprocity between a majority and minorities can happen without eventually -or initially- assuming and emphasising the majority's concerns. Reciprocity leads to precedence, not because logically or analytically we cannot have one without the other, but because in the western liberal context the dichotomy between minorities and majorities always has a fixed directionality in which the majority group seems to demand some major adjustments from minorities without giving up many of their privileges.

7.3 From majority anxieties to intercultural dialogue

The argumentation has led us to acknowledge the connection between the legitimate aims of cultural preservation, reciprocity, dialogue and the not-so legitimate majority anxieties in the intercultural context. I devote this section to its description. There are no evident obstacles in admitting recognition should not be an exclusive benefit for minorities. Aims of cultural preservation are not undesirable *per se*. 'If, however, minorities do have a right to identity preservation, then such a right depends not on "seniority or history", but on being a group that is not harming anyone. In which case, the majority does have this (qualified) right, but so do the minorities.' (Modood, 2015:357) As far as both groups develop *legitimate* anxieties on the continuity of their identity, both are entitled to embrace an identity preservation principle. Nonetheless, the nature of those anxieties is qualitatively different. Majorities possess a social privilege that secures its power to reproduce and extend their culture (Modood, 2015:356), which is not a privilege minorities enjoy. Therefore, the source of the anxieties is quite different.

If minorities were in a position to jeopardise the continuity of a majority culture, then there would not be such integration problems in the first place, and their constant denouncement of being victims of systematic disadvantage had been already disproven. It is hard to see how cultural minorities could jeopardise the continuity of a majority culture as such, but they might and should jeopardise some different spheres of privilege on which part of the majority culture flourish. It seems to me that most of the anxieties expressed by majority groups are nothing but fears of giving up their privileges, including the privilege of assuming that their ways of being and doing should be the norm. It is that taken-for-grantedness which minorities threaten.

Following a classical scheme of power, the oppressed group is more likely to

have a legitimate fear of being systematically disadvantaged or wiped out, while the dominant group generally covers with fussy anxieties and claims of reciprocity and neutrality its efforts to maintain its status quo.[83] In other instances of power relations such as race, gender and class, we can more readily perceive this search for privilege behind claims of reciprocity or neutrality. I cannot help but find resonances in other instances when reciprocity or neutrality are invoked. It is there every time someone affirms 'all lives matter' to turn down the legitimate claim behind 'black lives matter'; it is there every time that meritocracy is used to deny any systematic gender or class gap.

Additionally, along with scholars who are sceptical of democratic deliberative processes (Fraser, 1989; Young, 1990, 2007), I suspect that the context in which reciprocal recognition and dialogue are supposed to happen is unavoidably idealised. Modood amongst others correctly demonstrates there is no neutral public space, not even in liberal societies. 'Liberal states may aspire to be culturally neutral but all societies must have a symbolic-normative core that acts as an integrative mechanism, and liberal states are no exception.' (2015:356) However, when he considers the dialogic construction of identity, he seems to do it from an abstract perspective in which the particular social and political situation of the parties involved in the dialogue is not clear. Following Charles Taylor (1994) and Bhikhu Parekh (2000), dialogue is understood as a key element in the process of identity formation, individually and collectively. Despite that, it is not clear how dialogue works outside the abstract sphere of identity and within the socio-political framework of conflict. For instance, '…the claim that participants in dialogue implicitly aim at consensus is reminiscent of the ideal unity of the civic public.' (Young, 1990:118) Even if advocates of dialogic recognition usually attempt the leap from the abstract to the social, dialogue seems to remain somewhat idealised -or, to be more precise, formalised.

Instead of describing the *real* conditions for two or more unbalanced power groups to engage in dialogue, they focus on the formal ones. '[T]he dialogue

[83] I am not claiming that anxieties cannot be real; people from majority groups can have concerns about their cultural continuity that are as real as any other fear. I am saying that most of the time those concerns do not have real content or they lack a clear referent. For example, some European citizens might feel a true anxiety about what they consider the Islamisation of Europe, however, such claims do not find real evidence to support them. They refer more to a feeling of losing traditional hegemony than to real situations of disadvantage. Connected to the same example, Nasar Meer (2013:393-94) provides a helpful list of influential literature unveiling a presumed ongoing *western decline* at the hands of Islamic groups. He also provides a noteworthy list of papers refuting them. These kind of

requires certain institutional preconditions such as freedom of expression, agreed procedures and basic ethical norms, participatory public spaces, equal rights, a responsive and popularly accountable structure of authority, and empowerment of citizens,' (Parekh, 2000:340) What is assumed never starts from the factual conditions, usually linked to power imbalances. In this abstract dialogue, the actual unbalanced setup between the different actors is veiled by the ideal conditions in which it should happen, as if securing the formal requirements of dialogue would preclude the factual inequality between the interlocutors. In any case, this leads to a fundamental paradox: dialogue is supposed to be the key for fixing unbalanced power relations in the context of democratic liberal societies; however, in the way it is portrayed, it does not fix this but assumes it as a condition for *successful* dialogue. Let me go a little further on this.

Following Iris Marion Young's definition, we can say dialogic recognition belongs to the realm of deliberative democracy, that is, a form of democracy in which

> …participants aim to persuade one another of the rightness of their positions (…) Through dialogue others test and challenge these proposals and arguments. Because they have not stood up to dialogic examination, the deliberating public rejects or refines some proposals. Participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons (Young, 2000:22-23).

However, as with other forms of dialogue and deliberative democracy, dialogic recognition perhaps is not fully aware of the normative and moral conditions entailed in its proposal. Young mentions four requirements: inclusion, equality, reasonableness and publicity (2000), but there could be more. I will not further discuss the consequences of this. It is enough for my purposes to point out that the object that ought to be the output of dialogue, in this case recognition, is already a condition of dialogue itself in the form of inclusion and equality. It is important to clarify that I am not saying intercultural dialogue or dialogic recognition are useless or wrong. Nor am I saying that dialogue is entirely impossible, it is clear that it works on many levels and forms. Neither am I saying that we should relinquish dialogue in favour of other forms of dealing with our issues on diversity and plurality.[84] I am

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anxieties are usually presented on doubtful immigration demographics and projections.

[84] I can summing the attitude I find plausible using Grillo's words: 'It certainly must be recognised that intercultural dialogue is sometimes, perhaps often, impossible in a social or political sense - dialogue may be asymmetrical or otherwise distorted - and that language and culturally contexted linguistic practice mean that intercultural dialogue is often extremely

saying that in some difficult cases, *the fundamental ones*, such as dialogue on inclusion and recognition, the conditions and results seem to coincide.

Therefore, we need a form of strong recognition that is pre-dialogic and on which dialogue and deliberative democracy are possible, not the other way round. This is also a good chance to denounce the tendency to overemphasise the right conditions to perform dialogue. 'Ideal processes of deliberative democracy lead to substantively just outcomes because the deliberation begins from a starting-point of justice.' (Young, 2000:34) Dialogue is just one part of more complex dealings between groups. If diversity issues could be solved by dialogue, if it really could dissolve inequality, there would not be so many problems to reach it in the first place.

It is interesting to think that it is almost impossible for attempts at dialogue to fail -in the idealised conditions that scholars describe. Dialogue seems to happen only between moderate, reasonable and civil participants. It is equally interesting to think that despite the appropriate stress on the lack of neutrality of cultural groups, this is not clearly incorporated into the conditions for dialogue. 'On the dialogic view, members of different cultural groups within a society often influence one another and engage in productive cultural exchange, and this interaction ought to be mobilized to resolve intercultural conflict.' (Young, 2007:78) The idea of dialogue is still rooted in the context of the neutral mediation between different interests. In other words, behind the principle of dialogic recognition, there is a notion of liberal impartiality.

Despite efforts such as those of Modood and Parekh to go deeper on cultural preservation without endorsing neutrality or impartiality,[85] the liberal assumptions sneak in, reproducing relations of domination '…by justifying them or by obscuring possible more emancipatory social relations.' (Young, 1990:112) As Geoffrey Brahm Levey argues, they are closer to liberalism than they claim (2019:210) On the one hand, the right to preservation is by default extended to any group, but on the other hand, it is quickly restricted to some particular conditions, coincidentally liberal conditions.

One way liberalism sneaks in, besides the aforementioned, is by setting

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difficult and poses huge problems of understanding and (mis)-interpretation. Nonetheless, I wish at all costs to avoid falling into the trap of cultural solipsism. Thus, my answer to the question: "Is intercultural dialogue possible?", must be: "Yes, but…" (2018:44-45)

[85] The proposal is that minorities and majorities, through dialogue, can develop a common national identity that reflects and includes them all. In this sense, it is an alternative to the same problems originating in controlled interventionism or neutrality.

conditions for allowing cultural preservation and recognition of groups, that is, by judging groups with liberal criteria that do not necessarily belong to the communities. It is hard to see how recognition can be based on the *philosophical* principle of dialogic or relational construction of identity and, at the same time, have liberal requirements to work properly. Even Modood, who tries to push the philosophical principle further, affirms that 'Every group and not just a majority should have a *prima facie* right to identity preservation (as long as the rights and interest of others - groups and individuals- are taken into account, the cost is not too high, and so on)'. (2015:358)

The words between parentheses in the last quote, falsely suggest that they are extraneous to the argument. The emphasis in conditioning identity preservation results in attention being deflected to why, how and when a group might have *legitimate* anxieties about their identity, and not on identity itself. Modood concludes that, '…where appropriate, emphasising mutual recognition, or as Bouchard puts it, reciprocity, and not merely minority accommodation may be a political adjustment but is not a philosophical difficulty, for multiculturalists.' (2015:358) And this is an idea I want to underline: reciprocity and majority precedence are not issues for other liberal theories on diversity and plurality because they have already assumed them, not for the theoretical reasons Modood adduces, but for the political ones he found secondary. It is not the case that multiculturalism and interculturalism follow *strictly* the philosophical precept of the dialogic production of identity, but they do so only when the liberal framework is present. Majorities do have precedence *de facto* because they are already liberal, therefore, they are always legitimate subjects of dialogic recognition, and they become the context in which integration should take place. In other words:

> …national-cultural identity, because of its linkage with national citizenship, has some political and normative significance but is only acceptable as such if interpreted in a very liberal way: for example, if racist or intolerant aspects of the national culture get dropped. Individuals and groups have some freedom in emphasising different aspects of the national identity, which are differently and freely interpreted and allowed to change over time and through the inclusion of new groups. (Modood, 2015:359)

The real principle is that majorities are recognised, not when the group has developed legitimate anxieties about the preservation of their identity, but when they are liberal. The same happens to minorities, which in principle must be protected in the case their identity is threatened, but they are only *politically* recognised to the extent they are already in line with the liberal principles. Here Québec is again

paradigmatic. As I mentioned before, Kymlicka already knew that Québec is a perfect example of how a minority gets closer to the multicultural ideal, not because it is a prototypical instance of a minority securing its cultural distinctiveness, but because of the opposite, it is a case of a national minority that is liberalising itself.

> Moreover, the process of liberalization has also meant that the Québécois have become much more like English Canadians in their basic values. Liberalization in Quebec over the last thirty years has been accompanied by a pronounced convergence in personal and political values between English- and French-speaking Canadians, (…) liberalization in Quebec has meant both an increase in differences amongst the Québécois, in terms of their conceptions of the good, and a reduction in differences between the Québécois and the members of other liberal cultures. (Kymlicka, 1995:88)

Summing up, Québec interculturalism points out the need for recognition, and it does so through a principle of reciprocity, which establishes a footing for the mutual adjustments between a host majority and minorities. Without denying the benefits of this approach, I argued that identity cannot be an object of adjustments in the same way as everyday practices and behaviours. The pragmatic nature of adjusted reciprocity works at a different level than identity. I also called attention to some issues derived from this principle in the case of Québec interculturalism, denoting it is not founded in deep notions of identity and recognition: lack of symmetry, unbalanced adjustments, controlled interventionism, *ad hoc* precedence, and qualitatively different identity anxieties. Moreover, I contrasted Québec interculturalism with Modood's dialogic approach, which advocates cultural preservation and claims it is possible to achieve it without endorsing precedence and controlled interventionism from the majority culture. Finally, I assessed the idea of dialogic recognition and mentioned some issues that should be discussed further; first and foremost, I noted we should seriously consider a pre-dialogic form of recognition; I also describe how the liberal context furtively impose the real conditions for intercultural and multicultural dialogue. In fact, I drew some limits of Québec interculturalism and dialogic recognition, opening the door for pushing more radical forms of recognition and identity. More radical forms of recognition, beyond liberalism, we require a further distinction between togetherness and likeness as the legitimate basis for community and solidarity.

7.4 Two ideas of community: togetherness and likeness

While Québec interculturalism is openly involved in securing recognition for the Francophone culture, European interculturalism is closer to a form of cosmopolitanism in which individuals are considered as citizens of the world -kosmo/politês-.[86] Consequently, European interculturalism assumes a perspective whereupon members of communities do not need to develop strong attachments to national, ethnic, religious or racial frames. Such attachments are contraindicated as possibly preventing positive interaction with other individuals. 'The underlying assumption seems to be that too much positive recognition of cultural differences will encourage a retreat into ghettos, and a refusal to accept the political ethic of liberal democracy itself.' (Taylor, 2012:414). Scholars are still debating the limits of *political* recognition that cosmopolitanism should endorse, particularly national allegiance (Beck, 2002; Kleingeld & Brown, 2014; Kymlicka, 2001b; Waldron, 1992). Despite this debate's importance and interest, it is outside my remit. For my purposes, it is enough to say that in a mild version, cosmopolitanism is compatible with the national-state organisation of political life, in a quite similar fashion to the way Kant portrays his cosmopolitanism as an international legal order (1991 [1795]).

To make my argument watertight, it is not enough to claim that European interculturalism simply does not deal with strong recognition and move on. Instead, it is important to understand some possible consequences of this approach. In essence, it calls into question the *necessity* and/or the *desirability* of strong recognition, by questioning cultural attachments to groups. This criticism on the persistence of local social attachments in the context of modern societies is expressed from a wide range of standpoints, so wide that some of them could be indeed contradictory.

Some forms of cosmopolitanism would tend to universalise the idea of belonging, that is, every single individual belongs to a universal community, we literally belong to a *cosmo-polis.*[87] Still, other forms of cosmopolitanism would affirm

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[86] I mentioned a provisional definition of cosmopolitanism following Thomas Pogge (1992). It is useful to bring to mind the three main features described there: individualism, universality and generality.

[87] Samuel Scheffler's distinction between extreme and moderate cosmopolitanisms expresses in more detail the typology that I briefly refer to here. He affirms that 'The extreme view denies that there are [norms that apply only within an individual society and not to the global population as a whole], at least at the level of fundamental principle, although its proponents may concede that some distinction between social and global norms is justified on practical or instrumental grounds. The moderate view, by contrast, treats such a

there is no such thing as a universal community and the only certain thing is the ability of individuals to adapt and auto-preserve themselves in different social and cultural circumstances,[88] which is the idea behind cosmopolitanism as an elite phenomenon.[89] European interculturalism is halfway between these two radical forms. Both extremes might lead to simplistic understandings of cosmopolitanism's complex core; neither absolute universalism nor radical individualism adequately explain this position.

European interculturalism is a mild version of cosmopolitanism, and in a way, this fact places it beyond any simplistic views. However, this is less purposive and more accidental. I argue that to convey a proper notion of community, part of the solution is consciously avoiding absolute universalism and radical individualism. By doing this, we will be able to judge and understand attachments to particular cultures and groups. The idea of recognition of collective identities rests on what the word *community* denotes. To offer an apparently obvious definition, a *community* is nothing but the organisation around what a group of individuals have in *common*, and what we have in *common* is *what we share*. Here the problems begin because there are at least two different ways to understand *what we share*. One emphasises a notion of togetherness, anchoring the idea in more concrete instances of sharing; the other one underlines the issues of belonging and it is more concerned in verifying whether individuals possess certain properties, without necessarily involving a notion of togetherness. We can refer to this second notion as likeness. I

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distinction as fundamental; it denies that global justice takes the place of social justice, even at the level of basic principle, and it accepts that the members of an individual society owe each other some things, as a matter of justice, that they do not owe to non-members.' (1999:260)

[88] We can explain this wide range of stances as a matter of perspectives, methodological approaches or even more fundamental disciplinary understandings of cosmopolitanism. `We may discern that in scholarship concerned with cosmopolitanism, different disciplines tend to focus on top-down or bottom-up phenomena. Political scientists, political philosophers and legal scholars tend to focus variously on issues of global governance and the construction of a cosmopolitan democratic order. Anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists at least in their more empirical work, on the other hand, tend to find bottom-up orientations to cosmopolitanism more in line with their established research interests. Yet such a division of research labor does not work out altogether neatly.' (Hannerz, 2006a:196-97)

[89] Ulf Hannerz identifies this idea as an attempt to root cosmopolitanism in a particular social structure. 'It has been a longstanding assumption, whether implicit or explicit, that cosmopolitanism has been a privilege that often goes with other privileges; more or less an elite characteristic. Certainly this is not to say that all elites are cosmopolitans. Historically at least, however, a cosmopolitan cultural orientation in this view has gone with more formal education, more travel, more leisure as well as material resources to allow the acquisition of knowledge of the diversity of cultural forms. Moreover, taking a Bourdieuan perspective, we could find cosmopolitan tastes and knowledge serving as symbolic capital in elite competitive games of distinction.' (Hannerz, 2006b:205-6)

beg the reader to allow me to wander away from the particular case of European interculturalism for just a little while in order to further explicate these terms.

To begin, I want to call attention to the fact that the prefix co- or com- usually refers to what in English is understood as *together*. In this way, co-authors are those producing something together, co-habitants are those living together, to com-pound is simply putting together and, -closer to community- to communicate is to share or to make common. Accordingly, a community is, depending on its nature, a way of behaving, doing or experiencing *together*. This is the first way to understand the notion of community, but it is not the only one. The notion of community can also move closer to the affairs related to belonging, which I am going to refer to as *likeness*.

The notion of *what we share* can easily move between concrete instances of organised groups and more abstract notions of properties, qualities and attributes shared by different individuals. From here, two ways are possible: we can emphasise the concrete or the abstract. The more abstract the features, the more universal the community defined by them becomes; but more importantly, the more abstract the features, the weaker the notion of togetherness behind the defined community, until we eventually reach the extreme case: the pure individual. As Miguel de Unamuno said: 'There is nothing more universal than the individual, for what is the property of each is the property of all.' (1921:45)

In a closer connection with cosmopolitanism, features shared by *all* individuals, particularly the faculty of reason and its related agency, would suggest a community of all human beings. Strictly speaking, there is a community of all humans based on what we all have in *common.* In this case, what we have in common relies less and less on our factual interaction with others and more on the attributes residing in each individual.[90] In this case, following Aristotle, instead of the notion of togetherness, what we share is better expressed -in English- by the one of likeness.

> Things are called "like" which have the same attributes in all respects; or more of those attributes the same than different; or whose quality is one. Also that which has a majority or the more important of those attributes of something else in respect of which change is possible (i.e. the contraries) is like that thing. And ‘‘unlike’’ is used in the opposite senses to ‘‘like’’. (Aristotle, 1989:1018a)

The different notions behind our understanding of commonness and

[90] A similar issue on the impossibility of actual interaction between members of the same community inspired Benedict Anderson to develop his seminal work: *Imagined Communities*

community are very important because they imbue an indelible character to the following debates. On the one hand, the idea of commonness as *likeness* pairs an impression of individual self-sufficiency to the more abstract and universalist stance. At the same time, *togetherness* casts a shadow of dependency on collectivities in more concrete understandings of community. An important part of this distinction is already incorporated in debates on universalism vs particularism, or cosmopolitanism vs communitarianism. However, despite it being true that if we emphasise the concrete we will probably find ourselves in the domains of communitarianism, and similarly if we emphasise the abstract we are likely to be in the realm of cosmopolitanism, the key idea is not a predilection for the concrete or the abstract, but the idea of community as togetherness or likeness.

I firmly believe that portraying this tension in a more fundamental way could help us to understand the core of the debate. European interculturalism, as with most cosmopolitan theories, faces this debate by emphasising the apparent self-sufficiency of individuals and small groups to engage in cross-cultural interactions, without any further need to overstate a particular form of cultural attachment. But if my argument has developed sufficiently so far, then we are in a good position to understand that this stance is in accordance with the idea of a community based on likeness. From this starting-point it is easier to perceive that the idea of a global community as referring not to something that everyone experiences together, but as the potentiality of a set of properties present in each of us.

Let me clear up how this more abstract reflection is related to the particular case of European interculturalism. A first and obvious objection to my line of reasoning could assert that European interculturalism, contrary to what I avowed, is closer to the idea of togetherness than to likeness. After all, one merit of interculturalism is to push the idea of positive interaction between groups and individuals. There is an overwhelming abundance of references to the idea of pursuing *living together* as one of the main aims of European interculturalism. No need to go further than the main document developing its foundations, entitled *Living Together as Equals in Dignity* (Europe & Ministers, 2008). They can even argue that in contrast to other pluralist approaches emphasising differences between groups or essentialising their identities, instances of interculturalism are closer to notions of grassroots cohesion. Therefore, they are based on '…the sense of shared futures which we believe is at the heart of our model and our

(1983)

recommendations– an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies.' ((CIC), 2007:7) Furthermore, they can mention the plan of enriching spaces for intercultural dialogue as a key proposal for promoting the most positive interaction between people from different backgrounds. 'It is essential to engender spaces for dialogue that are open to all. Successful intercultural governance, at any level, is largely a matter of cultivating such spaces' (Europe & Ministers, 2008:33). Ultimately, what could convey better the aim of building the community *together* than intercultural dialogue?

> As Robert Putnam (2000) has outlined, shared places and spaces can play an important role in building strong community ties and networks of social support and reciprocity and while the debate about social capital in this context rightly emphasises 'bridging' social capital between different groups, it is the 'linking' social capital which connects individuals to wider opportunities and is more crucial for equalising life opportunities. (Cantle, 2012:196)[91]

It is hopefully clear that in the pluralist setting of this debate, European interculturalism indeed tries to push better ways for *bringing* people together, both, individuals and groups. However, I still believe European interculturalism is based on the idea of likeness more than in the notion of togetherness. In order to demonstrate this, we have to understand what *living together* means in the context I am developing my argument.

7.5 The difficulties of living together

The question of whether living together produces meaningful togetherness is important in public life, but it is also debatable in the sphere of the intimate, as the sociology of emotions has shown.[92] European interculturalism's idea of living together is based mostly on reinterpretations of Allport's contact theory (1954). However, it seems insufficient to knit a meaningful shared experience. It is beyond my plan to discuss in detail Allport's theory, but there is enough evidence to support it or at least to consider it a plausible solution for important issues in dealing with

[91] The reference to Putnam (2000) mentioned in the quotation corresponds to his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.*

[92] '…being there often involves doing, which both constitutes and is shaped by intimate (embodied) knowledge. (…) we need to widen our lens to include these other forms of action if we are to understand our emotional relationships to others.' (Brownlie, 2014:148-49)

diversity.[93]

Instead, I argue that contact theory is indeed an effective way to mitigate barriers predicated on prejudices and stereotypes, but it does not necessarily lead us to *build* our lives together, at least not in the meaningful way most of us expect. Alternatively stated, I accept that contact theory and, by extension, European interculturalism have the potential to dilute an important part of bigotry and discrimination coming from ignorance. Nonetheless, the inequalities beneath intolerant behaviours are not necessarily a matter of ignorance, but a matter of structural dissonance. In a few words, European interculturalism helps, to some extent, to understand the other, but it does not necessarily lead us to live *with* the other.

> The programmes attempted to build understanding between different groups and to create mutual trust and respect by breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions about the "other". Community cohesion thus rehabilitated the concept of "contact theory", building on the earlier work of Allport (1954) and others. New models based on this approach clearly demonstrated that prejudice and intolerance can be reduced by direct contact and interaction… (Cantle, 2013:80)

Reducing prejudice and intolerance, i.e. understanding the other, are definitely major steps forward in dealing with diversity in increasingly plural societies. This being said, on their own, they do not necessarily lead us to the kind of deep interaction that I find desirable. A crucial part of my argument affirms that the directionality of the process goes the other way round: understanding the other is more likely to happen when we already have a strong form of recognition because this allows suspension of judgement on something that is outside our existential framework. In any case, European interculturalism erases and questions the need for social recognition by focusing on the self-sufficiency of individuals and their everyday interactions. Unfortunately, by doing so, it prevents itself from building more meaningful relations between individuals and groups, relations which correspond to truly living *together* and that rely on something deeper than the everyday interaction.

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[93] There is an interesting debate on the clash between contact theory and conflict theory, particularly on grounds of the empirical evidence to support each in different contexts. 'Contact theory suggests that diversity erodes the in-group/out-group distinction and enhances out-group solidarity or bridging social capital, thus lowering ethnocentrism. Conflict theory suggests that diversity enhances the in-group/out-group distinction and strengthens in-group solidarity or bonding social capital, thus increasing ethnocentrism.' (Putnam, 2007:144). In the same text, Putnam provides a splendid account on this debate. For the purposes of my argument, I can concede that contact theory is effective to reduce ethnocentrism, and argue that even in that case it does not lead to people building their lives together in a meaningful way.

The difficulties in achieving meaningful modes of contact between members of different groups are evident. There is no doubt that simply placing people in close proximity does not imply they will positively engage or experience things *together*. For instance, Robert Putnam (2007) affirms that immigration and diversity, in the short to medium run, foster social isolation.[94] Similarly, the accurate criticism of some forms of segregation that interculturalism tries to overcome makes visible the fact that communities and individuals do not easily engage in positive interaction simply by sharing the same space.

Living together in the same area does not entail that people *truly* live together, that is, they do not necessarily engage in a meaningful construction of their respective beings. -This idea will be fully justified in the next chapter.- However, without advancing further let me state that I understand *living together* as building, making sense of, and sometimes rejecting the beliefs and values shaping our being. In other words, living together is not only a topological feature. Not even everyday engagement with the other is enough to claim that we are living together. It is about meaningful interaction rather than role relations. What I am trying to push is a notion of togetherness that is rooted in our complete identity, an idea close to Emmanuel Levinas' concept of vulnerability (1972), a notion that starts from realising that getting closer to the other is not representing her, nor even the consciousness of the proximity, but something deeper.

The idea of contact space and intercultural dialogue follows the logic that relations between different groups and individuals will improve by encouraging contact. Beyond the simplistic view, contact theory is more than just an optimistic claim about people living in the same place. Nevertheless, it lacks something to properly understand the idea of living together. We have to emphasise that European interculturalism considers that if we have more contact with people of other backgrounds, we will learn to trust one another, *but only if we do it in the right circumstances.* Therefore, its efforts focus on securing those circumstances and

[94] Putnam's larger argument is interesting. He affirms that 'My argument here is that in the short run there is a tradeoff between diversity and community, but that over time wise policies (public and private) can ameliorate that tradeoff.' (Putnam, 2007:164) In my opinion, this argument is suggestive because at the same time that it acknowledges the challenges of positive contact, he still believes that western democracies are on the right progressive path to achieving it. Literally, it is a matter of time. In contrast to what Putman believes, I think it is not an issue of gradual improvement of policies. The opposite, it is a fundamental issue. It is the framework behind this progressive notion preventing us from bypassing these processes of individualisation. In other words, individualisation and isolation are not the result of a trade-off between diversity and community, but the fundamental setting used to cement this dichotomy in the first place.

creating positive spaces for cross-cultural interaction. The process of intercultural placemaking is an important example of these efforts (Guidikova, 2014).

> Interculturalism aims especially to generate a strong sense of a cohesive society based on shared universal values. (…) from the perspective of the Council of Europe, the universal values upon which interculturalism is based are human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and the recognition that all human beings have equal dignity and are entitled to equal respect. When based on the latter approach, interculturalism rejects moral relativism on the grounds of 'cultural difference' and instead adopts a critical stance on illiberal cultural practices which violate these universal values. (Barrett, 2013:26)

However, the particular proposal of European interculturalism, by dint of its cosmopolitan nature, establishes a framework, a heavy institutional framework, that inverts the supposedly grassroots approach that gave birth to its emphasis on living together. 'Interculturalism proposes that intercultural dialogue requires a culturally neutral legal and institutional framework, as well as institutional structures that actively support and encourage intercultural dialogue.' (Barrett, 2013:27) It is in this paradox that I find support for my impression on how European interculturalism is closer to an idea of community as likeness than togetherness. Even when the narrative emphasises individuals and groups getting in contact and living together, all this happen in the context of liberal neutrality in which the significant notions, practices or behaviours influencing and constructing meaning are prevented from being deeply shared.

As I will argue in Chapter 8, truly share and engage in meaning construction is to modify the context. Without intervening the context, which is in fact what we can truly share *together*, we cannot mutually engage. European interculturalism is the kind of cosmopolitanism in which

> [t]hey identify modes of social and cultural relations that may be of political as well as intrinsic importance. But though tolerance, interest in others, and openness to change may all be political virtues, they are not in themselves bases for constituting polities; they do not explain patterns of allegiance. (Calhoun, 2003:541)

When thinking about the framework in which meaningful interaction should happen, the intercultural proposal becomes abstract and quasi-universal, following to the letter the ideals of liberal thought. It heavily underlines the shared universal values that must prevail and it prevents any particularity of the actors to conflict with the liberal aseptic environment. In consequence, there is indeed a gap, or at least an unclear issue, between a grassroots and everyday approach that is, at the same time, founded on universal principles.

If interculturalism aims to generate a cohesive society on shared universal

values then we can ask, what do people share in a cosmopolitan perspective such as the intercultural? Everything and nothing; we share the abstract form of being humans -almost in the platonic sense of the *eidos*- and a set of liberal universal values that comes along with this abstract human being. We share nothing concrete or *particular*. Is this abstract foundation more likely to promote meaningful interactions, cooperative forms of identity construction or a strong sense of cohesive society? I honestly doubt it. Could it help individuals to become more tolerant and respectful? Yes. But this is not what we mean by living together, securing social cohesion or developing a shared identity.

The kind of everyday togetherness promoted by interculturalism, even if it is affable and civilised, could not be enough to assert that we are living together. It is a way of being together *without* being together, a way of engaging with "the other" in the everyday level *without* engaging in the deep level where the construction of our collective identity could happen, that is, *without* engaging with her otherness. From being a proposal focused on the everyday construction of a shared life, European interculturalism finds itself supporting an abstract framework regulating these interactions through a core of features and values not clearly connected to the actual issues of social reality. Although one might argue that the supposedly universal values being promoted are actually the values of a specific community, this is not enough for claiming a true engagement with otherness. On the contrary, it seems to be an obstacle.[95] One thing is sure, individuals and groups do not articulate the meaning of their identity from abstractions, but from the concrete, using Ortega y Gasset's famous words: 'I am I and my circumstances' (2000 [1914]). Values and behaviours are meaningful because of the context in which they exist.

Summing up, regarding the idea of community, at the surface European interculturalism advocates an idea of togetherness, but underneath it is more aligned with an idea of likeness. The principles of European interculturalism, as far as they pretend to be universal lead necessarily to a mild version of cosmopolitanism. Other instances of cosmopolitanism are too universal, and paradoxically too individualistic, to provide the basis for a strong notion of community and subsequent matters such as cohesion and solidarity. The

[95] Taylor mentions that 'The charge levelled by the most radical forms of the politics of difference is that "blind" liberalisms are themselves the reflection of particular cultures. And the worrying thought is that this bias might not just be a contingent weakness of all hitherto proposed theories, that the very idea of such a liberalism may be a kind of pragmatic

cosmopolitan notion of individual self-sufficiency is in accordance with universal principles, but it is hard to see how a strong collective identity might arise from them. Hopefully, this digression is sufficient to show that, in our understanding of the two notions behind the concept of community, European interculturalism focuses more on shared liberal attributes -likeness- than shared life -togetherness-. There is an inconsistency in claiming a grassroots approach and proposing a universal base for it. We can explain the attempt to have the best of both worlds because of the fear of relativism that pushes liberal efforts to look for a universal context for interactions. This is what I analyse in the next section.

7.6 The fear of relativism

Taking a closer look at the issues faced by European interculturalism and the solutions it offers, we can better perceive the reasons for this dissonance between grassroots everyday interactions and a universal base for their promotion. Following the characterisation that I developed, there are three principal beliefs behind the idea of a positive space of interaction in European interculturalism: fluid identity, no categorisation of collective identity, and development of dialogic competences. These presumptions work as *ad hoc* adaptations to prevent important problems related to diversity such as substantiation of identity, stereotypes and discrimination. In terms of social justice, European interculturalism tries to overcome segregation, exclusion and reduction of social capital, all forms of social inequality. Its positive aspect attempts to promote social cohesion through equality practices. In the political sphere, it makes an effort to prevent the lack of citizen loyalty and instability, produced mainly by changes in traditional values and relations; its response is to channel those changes in values. In the cultural realm, the problems are understood as a sort of incompleteness of cultural capabilities, almost in the same way that Nussbaum (2000) proposes, and the solution consists in advancing liberal conditions.

While we could carry on digging and enumerating problems almost indefinitely, a single spectre looms and motivates this universalism: relativism. ‘Moreover, such a conceptual shift from multicultural co-existence to intercultural dialogue may avoid the trap of cultural relativism and provide the basis of a true

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contradiction, a particularism masquerading as the universal. (1994:44)

living together.' (Bekemans, 2013:171) In the same way, Barret (2013:26) pinpoints that universal values intentionally oppose what is considered the undesirable consequence of diversity: moral relativism. As I argue here, this rejection of relativism and the attempt to introduce intercultural dialogue follows more an aim of *persuading* members of minorities to renounce illiberal beliefs and practices, than a real dialogue between two different perspectives.

We can be certain that European interculturalism refuses to deal with recognition due to the unbearable fear that providing recognition to particular groups would lead to and support moral relativism; which is not exactly an animadversion of relativism itself, but of illiberality. Relativism is okay if it happens within the liberal framework's wiggle room but it is not acceptable outside it. In other words, the particular form of relativism that occurs within the liberal framework is conveniently labelled as pluralism and it has been traditionally encouraged and supported. However, the other forms of relativism that go beyond the limits of the liberal principles produce noteworthy animadversion. In Chapter 3 I pointed out the assumption that a civic State is able to embrace cultural and ethnic diversity, allowing a plurality of interests, as long as the neutral and impartial institutions are the mediator between those different interests. 'The state stands above society, apart and detached, overseeing and refereeing the competition and conflict that arises in individuals' private pursuit of their private gain.' (Young, 1990:112) This is another instance of how the liberal framework pushes pluralism out while trying to prevent relativism. Isaiah Berlin exemplifies this emphasis on plurality instead of relativism.

> The fact that the values of a culture may be incompatible with those of another, or that they are in conflict within one culture or group or in a single human being at different times -or, for that matter, at one and the same time- does not entail relativism of values, only the notion of a plurality of values not structured hierarchically; which, of course, entails the permanent possibility of inescapable conflict between the outlooks of different civilisations or of stages of the same civilisation. (1991:80)

We can criticise European interculturalism in the same spirit as other cosmopolitan perspectives: '…cosmopolitan liberals often fail to recognize the social conditions of their own discourse, presenting it as freedom from social belonging rather than a special sort of belonging, a view from nowhere or everywhere rather than from particular social spaces.' (Calhoun, 2003:532) Even worse,

> The ideal of impartiality legitimates hierarchical decisionmaking and allows the standpoint of the privileged to appear as universal. The combination of these functions often leads to concrete decisions that

> perpetuate the oppression and disadvantage of some groups and the privilege of others. (Young, 1990:116)

European interculturalism tends to emphasise its most universal side when it faces the risk of relativism, which is not an exclusive tendency, multiculturalism does this too. It is quite thought-provoking to realise that both approaches fight relativism, from different perspectives -cosmopolitanism and nationalism- emphasising the same idea of liberality.

The fear of relativism is important for my argument because it is a limitation for a deeper form of recognition related to identity. In other words, the form of recognition that I propose tries to go beyond the plurality within a unique liberal framework, but it refers to the diversity of frameworks. I affirmed before that European interculturalism is a kind of cosmopolitanism that allows some allegiance to national institutions and it does not completely deny the idea that individuals can develop loyalty to particular groups. However, when it is time to deal with relativism, its perspective tends to radicalise in line with the universal principles of liberalism. I am not going to discuss again the issue of the possible *illiberality* of imposing a liberal framework, but a radical version of cosmopolitan liberalism can be illiberal if it insists in enforcing an impartial, blind law under every possible circumstance (Allen, 2007).

What is important for my purposes is that the tendency of permitting a unique framework is reductionist in regard to the factual forms of diversity, thus preventing their proper recognition. Advocates of cosmopolitanism are aware of the paradoxes of liberal imposition. Accordingly, European interculturalism has a solution to avoid the imposition that comes from enforcing a unique framework: dialogue. Illiberal practices should not be simply banned, instead they have to be challenged and adjusted dialogically. In this way, imposition is prevented. For instance, discussing the banning of the burqa in public places in France and Belgium, Robin Wilson affirms that 'Such bans have been given some progressive legitimacy on the claim that the covering of women has always reflected patriarchal control of their bodies. But this substantive liberal argument does not justify the illiberal resort to coercion, rather than public political dialogue,' (2013:55). In a similar manner, Michael Dusche's proposal of internal universalism is particularly interesting.

> I propose internal universalism, which is a form of meta-ethical relativism (to be explained below). Internal universalism does not rule out the possibility of universal norms but insists that these are attained through a process of dialogue and negotiation approximating universal consensus. (2004:239)

In Dusche's internal universalism, dialogue might indeed prevent the tone of imposition of a unique framework, however, it does not stop the reductionism that comes with a unique framework. Additionally, I have shared my thoughts on how the conditions of dialogue are more difficult to achieve than is usually assumed.

> …there are very high expectations of intercultural dialogue entertained by political theorists and by practitioners (and not least by some politicians), accompanied by limited understanding of how those expectations might be achieved. Nonetheless, while the idea that intercultural dialogue is a "good thing" largely prevails, some observers see it as a snare and a delusion and are deeply skeptical about what it is meant to do. (Grillo, 2018:78)

Some important questions come up from the liberal efforts to stop relativism: what is the content of that *diversity* which fits completely within the confines of liberalism? If we liberalise everything, are we truly defending diversity? Or are we reducing real forms of otherness? The paradoxical situation of promoting diversity within a framework that is held to be uniquely valuable can lead us to question the place of diversity in modern societies in a more general way. Let me refer to a influential study on the totalitarian mannerisms disguised as democracy and liberalism. Using Marcuse's words:

> The rule of law, no matter how restricted, is still infinitely safer than rule above or without law. However, in view of prevailing tendencies, the question must be raised whether this form of pluralism does not accelerate the destruction of pluralism. (…) The reality of pluralism becomes ideological, deceptive. It seems to extend rather than reduce manipulation and coordination, to promote rather than counteract the fateful integration. (1991:54-55)

Therefore, the key question is whether we are going to prevent relativism, at the expense of inhibiting diversity, or whether we are going to deal positively with relativism to truly embrace diversity. This second option is the one that I will develop in the next chapter of this text.

7.7 Conclusions

Neither Québécois interculturalism nor European deals with strong identity and recognition. The road taken by Québécois interculturalism of pushing a reciprocity principle, controlled interventionism and majority precedence is hard. It seems to create more problems than it solves. However, that is just the tip of the iceberg. Digging further we can even question the idea that dialogue or a liberal framework would help to move us forward in pursuing more positive relations

between individuals and communities. In the case of strong identity and recognition, adjusted reciprocity is not even possible. We have suggested, without yet justifying it, that recognition at this level should be pre-dialogic, and that identity is more complex than what is emphasised from the political and social dimensions. In the case of European interculturalism, I emphasised the contradictions of a grassroots approach founded on universal principles. The contradiction denotes an aim to build communities under a paradigm of togetherness, but also on the basis of a universal approach closer to likeness. The emphasis on the neutrality prevents us from living together in a meaningful way and, unfortunately, contact theory is not enough to solve this issue. And attached to neutrality, as the other side of the same coin, there is the fear of relativism and its consequences. This fear has always stopped the most well-intended liberal efforts on diversity and plurality; this is the very same fear of being called: illiberal.

Although interculturalism claims to address the limitations of multiculturalism, it faces many of the same problems in that it can recognise differences only in ways that fail to see cultural diversity and collective identity. In its attempt to write a new theory of diversity and plurality for the new century, interculturalism wrote again some chapters of multiculturalism.

Chapter 8

Strong identity.

In the *Life of Theseus,* Plutarch mentions that the hero's ship was preserved by the Athenians for a long time after his death. However, 'They took away the old timbers from time to time, and put new and sound ones in their places, so that the vessel became a standing illustration for the philosophers in the mooted question of growth, some declaring that it remained the same, others that it was not the same vessel.' (1914:XXIII) This philosophical problem is known as the ship of Theseus or Theseus' paradox. The complexity of the matter unveils some of the most important problems of identity. If something changes its parts, can we still claim it to be the same? What secures the unity of a physical object or of any entity? What does it mean for something to be that particular something and not something else? Is it possible to change in such a way that something stops being what it is and transforms into something different? What properties make something what it is? And perhaps most interesting; how do things stay the same despite the fact they change? Any attempt to tackle just one of these questions would take a lifetime. However, one thing is sure: the persistence of the questions denotes the problem's importance.

Things get particularly interesting when we focus on human identity, both individual and collective. It is evident that every person changes over time, so we can question what we have in common with ourselves 10, 15 or 20 years ago. Are we the same person? Similar problems and questions can be addressed to collective identity. Also, in that case, there is one certitude: communities change over time. However, how is it possible that collective identities persist if they change their members? Why do we claim a community, a nation for instance, is the same even if its members, values and practices shifted over the past century?

Slowly we can see that some of these questions move closer to our topic. If we change our practices and behaviours, are we still the same community? If we want to preserve our identity, should we oppose any possible change? Which changes are allowed without surrendering our identity? Which changes are too much? In the case of human identity, the problem is more complex because we have to consider agency, which means we do not necessarily change as other entities do, but we can do it as a result of our will and reason. In other words, human identity is more complex because it is not natural but constructed, and its particular identity and associated property of change are qualitatively different than the identity and change of natural entities.

Identity is a problem that resists, as the fundamental ones always do, any final solution. It is a notion that leads to more paradoxes instead of solutions as we try to advance. In the context of modern diversity and plurality there is a basic paradox besides the one about identity-change: identity-diversity. This paradox is clearly spotted by Parekh when he affirms: 'Paradoxical as it may seem, the greater and deeper the diversity in a society, the greater the unity and cohesion it requires to hold itself together and nurture its diversity.' (2000:196) Even more important, the paradox does not fade away in the solution proposed: 'A shared sense of national identity is necessary but also potentially dangerous, a force for both unity and division, a condition for the community's cohesion and reproduction which can also alienate large sections of its citizens and become a cause of its fragmentation.' (2000:231).

In this context, I present my proposal: to understand identity as being. It is part of a tradition that tries to deal with these fundamental issues, which also denotes its utter unoriginality. It is merely another attempt to think through identity that takes previous ideas and tries to articulate them in a different way. The novelty of the proposal, if any, lies in trying to expand the debate beyond the political to the ontological sphere. However, just like other ideas dealing with identity, it is far from being a definite answer and it could be criticised in many aspects. I hope it provides some possible solutions to the problems of identity and recognition in the context of our time, but it is clear that more work needs to be done. I do not deny the most influential properties and definitions of identity; it can be understood as membership (Goodin, 1996:362), belonging (Modood, 2001:249), something socially constructed (Bonnett, 1997), and the social glue in modern societies (Ehala, 2017:11). However, I argue these and other particular approaches truly represent our identity only when

they are considered in the organic unit in which they make sense; different parts of our self can be analytically considered for different purposes but it is the whole that provides meaning and coherence. In the same way, in Theseus's paradox, it is the ship as a whole and not the particular timbers that provides identity. This is the fundamental notion behind what I call strong identity: the unity that remains after the particular changes we can enact in different parts of our self.

Strong identity mainly refers to what we *are*. It is not a property or something we can instrumentally use to deal with the issues of everyday life, which is not to deny the adaptations that we are in fact able to make in different circumstances -we can change the timbers of the ship as many times as we want. Nor does it deny that these adaptations are part of what can change our identity, ultimately, our identity includes it all; it denies the claim that our whole identity can immediately change through adaptations as if it was a sort of chameleonic entity. We do not *have* an identity, nor multiple identities, but a complex unified identity that includes everything that we are. Otherwise we are not able to explain how we change over time, or how we can construct ourselves or how we can question our deepest values and beliefs. All of these are important matters that can possibly be addressed by identity as being.

Any notion of identity proposed, including the one developed here, must be in accordance with the current state of affairs. It is clear that intense waves of migration, the extinction of an antagonistic, parallel economical system, the complex geopolitical arrangements of a post-cold war world, globalisation, liberalisation and other important social, political and historical phenomena have shaped the way we understand identity nowadays. I portrayed all of them in the previous chapters as the context in which liberal and critical theories understand identity and recognition. In fact, the issues derived from these diverse affairs unveil the urgency of a functional concept of identity. The philosophical approach I assume does not ignore the actual historical world, but tries to emphasise the ontological significance of it. In fact, the limits and issues I collected in my analysis of currently dominant theories of diversity urge us to take a step towards philosophical discussion. As can be perceived, my attempt implies that the idea of identity has a pre-eminence within the history of philosophy and within history itself. In any case, I assume that the philosophical and social, political, cultural, historical and even economic aspects of reality are not detached, completely the opposite, they are closely intertwined; otherwise, my own proposal would be unrelated to the issues I analysed before.

The chapter has 5 sections before its Conclusion. In the first section, I argue that the context of modern philosophy helps us to comprehend how and why we deal with diversity and plurality the way we do, particularly in liberal politics. Through the modern vs post-modern, humanist vs anti-humanist debates we can unveil conceptions shaping our understanding of the current world, in this case through support for, or criticism of, modern identity. The next section explains Taylor's definition of identity as an understanding of who we are. It also emphasises his contribution in linking identity and agency, as well as including the recognition offered by others as part of our identity construction. The third section shows that despite identity including the understanding of who we are, how we are and where we stand, it cannot be reduced to self-understanding. Additionally, I describe the existential context of our identity, which is particularly important in instances in which we question cultural goods and values, as happens in processes of integration. In Section 4, I claim we need to develop *a humanism of the other,* which expands identity beyond the limits of individuality and agency. Then I portray my definition of strong identity as being, as a whole, as a unity. Our identity is *the organic articulation* of attachments, decisions, feelings, projects and any other 'part' included in ourselves. Finally, in the fifth section, I describe the process of identity construction and I connect it to a general idea of history, allowing us to glimpse the formation and flux of collective identity. I claim that constructing our identity is constructing the world as a horizon. In more particular terms, I argue that we exercise agency from a determined context but simultaneously we slowly shape that context by exercising our agency. This dialectical relation is what I think is an essential part of how history develops. Then, I affirm that internal and external conflicts and not only the agreements between ourselves and the others provide the driving force of history.

Keeping our identity, individually and as a community, is as important as securing our being. We can change parts of ourselves, sometimes because we want to, sometimes because we have to, and sometimes it just happens. However, we have to do it while always keeping our being whole. Just as with Theseus' ship, we do both; we persist and we change because we are more than our parts, more than our agreements and tensions. We are the organic unity of all of them.

8.1 The philosophical context of identity: between modernity and post-modernity, between humanism and anti-humanism

In this section, I argue that to be able to grapple with the concept of identity in the sense I am concerned with is important to philosophically and historically contextualise certain modern and postmodern ideas. In the next sections, a critical examination of Charles Taylor's works will help me to analyse the idea of modern identity but I consider it necessary to contextualise even Taylor's work within a wider philosophical context. I apologise in advance for what might feel like a long digression before getting to the point. However, it is important for my argument to situate the assumptions about identity precisely in the philosophical context in which they make sense. Gaining clarity in this debate would help me to justify my own proposal.

The philosophy of a certain period can disclose hegemonic interpretations of the world.[96] In this sense, by looking to the philosophy of our time we can explain why and how we approach diversity and plurality the way we do. If we examine, for instance, the narrative of a novel cosmopolitan globalised world, where the main change consists in the 'emancipation' of individuals from the constraints of fixed collective identities, we can find it has roots in the philosophical '…new understanding of individual identity that emerges at the end of the eighteenth century. We might speak of an *individualized* identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself.' (Taylor, 1994:28) In the same way, if we consider the alternative discourse on the importance of belonging to a group, we can spot philosophical assumptions about autonomy, freedom, individuality and identity that shape it. Yael Tamir affirms that our individual ability to make autonomous choices about our life relies on our cultural context, therefore, our individual liberty and the

[96] Contrary to Marx's criticism on philosophers in his famous *Theses on Feuerbach,* philosophy does contribute in intervening in the world. Important philosophers have interpreted the world because they wanted to change it. The dynamics at the history of philosophy's core, in which new proposals present themselves in opposition and criticising the former ones, denotes the aim of changing the immediate and contemporary. And more importantly, philosophical theories are not innocuous projects disconnected from reality, but part of critical stances looking at changing a current state of affairs. Arendt, in a very clear way, unveiled the strong link between the *vita contemplativa* and the transformation of the world. She said: 'Thus it was not primarily the philosopher and philosophic speechless wonder that molded the concept and practice of contemplation and the *vita contemplativa*, but rather *homo faber* in disguise; it was man the maker and fabricator, whose job it is to do violence to nature in order to build a permanent home for himself, and who now was persuaded to renounce violence together with all activity, to leave things as they are, and to find his home in the contemplative dwelling in the neighborhood of the imperishable and eternal.' (1958:304)

construction of our identity are attached to belonging to a cultural community (1993). In both approaches, we can perceive the importance of individual identity[97]. Consequently, we need to grasp individualised identity in its philosophical circumstance in order to understand how the continual process of liberalisation gave us the theories of plurality and diversity analysed above.

In that regard, there is great merit in Charles Taylor's work; he clearly identifies that theories of diversity and plurality cannot reach a deep comprehension of their proposals without a philosophical understanding of identity. In his influential work *The Sources of the Self,* Taylor faces the challenge of portraying the idea of modern identity through its historical development, from Descartes to Heidegger -and even before in its proto-modern form, from Plato to Augustine-. He attempts '…to show how understanding our society requires that we take a cut through time (…) only through adding a deep perspective of history one can bring out what is implicit but still at work in contemporary life' (1989:497-98). Furthermore, several problems and criticisms faced by philosophers on their path to constructing the idea of an individualised identity are replicated in current debates on plurality and diversity, denoting the urgency of dealing with these issues.

The theories dealing with plurality and diversity described in earlier chapters -multiculturalism, interculturalism, cosmopolitanism, communitarianism, civic conceptions of nationalism- share an uneasy relationship with our conflicting understandings of our self in the philosophical sense. They are more than philosophical concerns, they are manifestly political movements making specific demands. The connection becomes visible, however, when we realise that these theories draw heavily on identity -particularly national identity-, taking advantage of its weaknesses and strengths according to their own social and political engagements. Therefore, I analyse further some implications of handling a concept with such theoretical and historical importance.[98]

The philosophical issues concerning identity can be identified using different terms because identity is usually conflated with other fundamental notions. As such, we often hear about ego, self, individuality, subjectivity, personality, belonging, and

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[97] In former chapters, I have discussed extensively the apparent paradox of two opposed theories -nationalism and cosmopolitanism- claiming to be liberal. However, they are similar on the fundamental issue of the individual as the key unit of society. The debate is if collective identity is necessary, useful or desirable for the individual flourishment -using Nussbaum's terms-, but the individual is still at the centre of the scheme.

[98] Clearly, there are important scholars, involved in the theories of pluralism I described before, who have robust philosophical formations. Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor, and Bhikhu

the one I propose as principal: being.[99] These concepts work on different levels of abstraction and hold important nuances, but all ultimately refer to our humanity and what makes us who we are in each individual instance. It is always the ego of a particular human being, the individuality of a specific human being, the personality of a distinctive human being, the belonging and self-understanding of a human being, and lastly the being of a human being. Effectively, gaining knowledge of these features is equivalent to understanding someone's identity, which is basically knowing her being. '…[T]o say that people know their own identity is to say that they know "who they are". Equally, to claim knowledge of the identity of others is to claim to know "who they are".' (R. Williams, 2000:3)

I hope the reader may excuse my overemphasis of this particular point, but it makes a crucial contribution to the perspective I want to propose: it is not only the case that identity raises important philosophical questions, but they shape our understandings of and, in consequence, our dealings with the world. As Taylor puts it, exploring identity is exploring *l'humaine condition*. If we consider his idea of a process of internalisation -inwardness- at the core of modern identity as illustrative, we can perceive that any take on it has huge 'human' implications.

> Adopting the stance of disengagement towards oneself defines a new understanding of human agency and its characteristic powers. And along with this come new conceptions of the good and new locations of moral sources: an ideal of self-responsibility, with the new definitions of freedom and reason which accompany it, and the connected sense of dignity. To come to live by this definition -as we cannot fail to do, since it penetrates and rationalizes so many of the ways and practices of modern life- is to be transformed: to the point where we see this way of being as normal, as anchored in perennial human nature in the way our physical organs are. But the very idea that we have or are "a self", that human agency is essentially defined as "the self", is a linguistic reflection of our modern understanding and the radical reflexivity it involves. (Taylor, 1989:177)

If my arguments demonstrating the importance of considering the philosophical context have succeeded, we can focus on the debate surrounding issues of modern identity, that is, modern vs post-modern or humanist vs anti-humanist. Therefore, it is worthwhile to say something about the connection between humanism and modern identity.

Humanism is not a unified perspective; very different approaches could be qualified as humanist: they can go from Christian humanism to Marxian humanism,

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Parekh are prominent figures in philosophy.

[99] What I propose is to consider identity, individual and collective identity, simply as a word to denote what we are. Therefore, pushing for recognition in this context is not attempting to get political acknowledgment, but ontological one.

and from concrete social programs to metaphysical and epistemological systems. However, in order to keep it as simple as possible and to emphasise what is useful for my argument, I consider only its emphasis on some attributes of human beings.

> Humanism is a complex phenomenon, and, although it takes on many different, sometimes overlapping, often contradictory forms, the skeptical post-modernists have serious reservations about all of them because each requires a subject and attributes special attention to human beings, individuals. (Rosenau, 1992:48)

Humanism for my purposes mostly denotes overemphasis on an *individualised* conception of human beings, but it also refers to the projects, aspirations and principles leading to anthropocentric precedence over other beings. The critiques that reach the core of modern subjectivity usually find their target by referring to the assumptions of humanism.

> Every humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one. (…) The result is that what is peculiar to all metaphysics, specifically with respect to the way the essence of the human being is determined, is that it is "humanistic." Accordingly, every humanism remains metaphysical.' (Heidegger, 1998:245)

The metaphysical assumptions of humanism portray human beings as distinctive in contrast to other beings; they particularly characterise a human individual as a rational, intellectual being able to grasp the world through reason and able to act in consequence of this understanding. Reason becomes the only way to communicate with the world.

> Understanding the world for a man is reducing it to the human, stamping it with his seal. (…) the mind that aims to understand reality can consider itself satisfied only by reducing it to terms of thought. If man realized that the universe like him can love and suffer, he would be reconciled.' (Camus, 1991:17)

At the other extreme of the philosophical universe from modern, liberal, individualised identity is the post-modern approach. This alternative perspective is a reaction to the philosophical principles behind modernity and, of particular interest to us, against modern identity and its consequences.

> The skeptical post-modernists oppose the modern subject for at least three reasons. First, s/he is an invention of modernity. Second, any focus on the subject assumes a humanist philosophy with which the post-modernists disagree. Third, the subject automatically requires an object, and postmodernists renounce the object-subject dichotomy. (Rosenau, 1992:46)

Several times the critiques on the modern subject and humanism go from the consequences to the causes, from historical and political events such as Nazism, war, genocide, inequality or oppression to the criticism of an abstract idea of human nature and over-individualised subjectivity as its cause (Arendt, 1961, 1994 [1964];

Bauman, 1989). There is no need to emphasise that both aspects are related, and if post-modern stances are able to legitimately claim the crisis of humanism, it is because there is a crisis of humankind; the crisis of humanism is the crisis of the human condition. Philosophers, such as Abraham Edel, emphasise the historical and moral sides of the crisis:

> …the crisis in humanism today is not basically in its philosophical outlook which is far from outworn, not in its social program which becomes increasingly mandatory as other solutions to contemporary problems show their bankruptcy, but in the area of practical attitudes, in the turbulent uncertainties of our revolutionary age. (1968:295)

Other thinkers pay more attention to the ontological features and consequences of the crisis. 'Modern anti-humanism is no doubt right when it does not find in man understood as the individual of a genus or of an ontological region, an individual persevering in being like all substances, a privilege that would make of him the goal of reality.' (Lévinas, 1986:138) And there are some others, such as Arendt, that have the lucidity to identify that there is no gap between the philosophical and the historical crisis of modernity, that is, there is no gap between humanism and the human condition.

> It would be folly indeed to overlook the almost too precise congruity of modern man's world alienation with the subjectivism of modern philosophy, from Descartes and Hobbes to English sensualism, empiricism, and pragmatism, as well as German idealism and materialism up to the recent phenomenological existentialism and logical or epistemological positivism. But it would be equally foolish to believe that what turned the philosopher's mind away from the old metaphysical questions toward a great variety of introspections (…) was an impetus that grew out of an autonomous development of ideas, or, in a variation of the same approach, to believe that our world would have become different if only philosophy had held fast to tradition. (Arendt, 1958:272-3)

There are different ways to 'measure' the depth of the opposition[100] to modern humanism and modernity in general. The criticism can be so wide that goes from the political and artistic dimensions of modernity to the moral and metaphysical ones; in most cases, the post-modern disapproval of the modern paradigms mixes critiques from different disciplines and viewpoints. In the metaphysical field, they reject the modern subject because it leads to an essentialisation of humankind. In other words, it postulates some sort of human nature expressed by the aims and

[100] Pauline Rosenau (1992) portrays a very useful way to understand the diversity within post-modernism. She proposes a distinction between sceptical and affirmative post-modernists. Sceptics tend to a pessimistic overall perspective -the post-modernism of despair-, mainly influenced by Nietzsche and Heidegger. The affirmative strand agrees in the diagnosis of the modern flaws, but defend a more hopeful view and are more optimistic about political action, struggle and resistance.

goals of humanism. For instance, Taylor -who is an intermediate figure between the modern and post-modern- affirms that an important part of twentieth-century philosophy has refuted the disengaged subject; it rejects the idea of an abstract agent independent from social relations and the subsequent constitution of an instrumental society in which life is lacking the matrices for the meanings of life to flourish. He alleges that, '…the individual has taken out of a rich community life and now enters instead into a series of mobile, changing, revocable associations, often designed merely for highly specific ends. We end up relating to each other through a series of partial roles.' (1989:502)

As we can expect, some more radical post-modern criticism goes beyond this point and truly attempt to dissolve subjectivity, for example, Judith Butler finds in the internalisation of subjectivity nothing but disciplinary production (1999:183-188). Other proposals, such as structuralism and post-structuralism, push a notion of society in which individuals are not at the core of the social processes, especially by emphasising the structures forming the social tissue, the emptiness of subjectivity and the lack of individual agency in historical processes.

In any case, if post-modern criticism still has any value, it is because the world it criticises remains quite modern. Despite all the legitimate particularities that we can find inherent in post-industrial societies, the values are quite modern -rationality, efficiency, progress, etc. Modernity is at its apogee in this sense. We live more in the modern world than in a post-modern one; or if we want to be more accurate, we are in *high modernity*, as Anthony Giddens described it.

> Some have even presumed that such fragmentation marks the emergence of a novel phase of social development beyond modernity –a postmodern era. Yet the unifying features of modern institutions are just as central to modernity– especially in the phase of high modernity –as the disaggregating ones. (1991:27)

Anti-humanist post-modernism is at the opposite side of liberal -humanist- modernism. However, the concept of identity is central for both approaches, delimiting the philosophical context I referred to the beginning of the section. Through their debates, they confine the spectrum in which we understand our current world. Now that we have an idea of how identity is understood from these two perspectives, the contrast with my proposal will be easier to spot. In the next sections, I develop my proposal to move towards a *humanism of the other*.

8.2 Taylor's dialogic identity: diversity and relativism

Charles Taylor engaged in the detailed description of modern identity in his influential work, *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity* (1989). However, his proposal of a renewed understanding of modernity extends through several books, particularly *The Politics of Recognition* (1994). He justifies this intellectual effort claiming that modern identity is at the core of the most important conflicts in our culture and society. He found that at these crucial disputes' centre are disengaged and instrumental modes of thought and life, which are important consequences of modern identity.

In essence, Taylor's concerns are ethical and moral. His work on identity is driven by the moral concerns about instrumental forms of thought and behaviours. He says: 'What emerges from the picture of the modern identity as it develops over time is not only the central place of constitutive goods in moral life, (…) but also the diversity of goods for which a valid claim can be made.' (Taylor, 1989:502)[101] Nevertheless, his moral concerns go beyond the reduced sphere of the ethical and are treated conjointly with the ontological perspective. Because of this connection between identity and morality, Taylor is able to find the ways in which our understanding of identity leads to current moral issues and vice versa. To some extent, he agrees with the post-modern criticism, affirming that disengaged and instrumental modes of modernity empty our life of meaning, destroy public freedom and back ecological irresponsibility.

To get to grips with Taylor's account of identity, we need to look briefly at his account of morality and goods. I think this is the key to his proposal, *in principle*: he defends the diversity of the goods in the moral life, including those related to the instrumental society he criticises for other reasons. The fundamental problem is not instrumentalism or disengagement *per se*, but the reduction of the possible forms of life to a unique set of goods. In that respect, his position is close to Frankfurt School criticisms of Enlightenment and modern reason. (Horkheimer, 1985; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002; Marcuse, 1991) He says: '…following one good to the end may be catastrophic, not because it isn't a good, but because there are others which can't

[101] Taylor believes that goods in general '…are measures, or institutions, or states of affairs which offer satisfactions…' (1995:44). More specifically, he pays attention to irreducibly common goods, that is, '(1) the goods of a culture which makes actions, feelings, ways of life which are of value conceptually feasible; and (2) goods which essentially incorporate common understandings of their value.' (1995:58). In this case constitutive goods are synonymous with irreducibly common goods.

be sacrificed without evil.' (Taylor, 1989:503) This is important for the argument as it is a way to link plurality and identity. Identity is constructed from the goods we reject and embrace, that is, from the goods that are available to us, not only from the ones that are positive and we agree on. This leads to what I consider another of Taylor's contributions.

He demonstrates there is no rigid and strict causal relationship between the goods and their historical expressions, that is, there is an intrinsic relativism around the goods. In consequence, we are not entitled to completely deny the value of any specific good despite the negative consequences it might have produced historically. That reductionism would be descriptively possible, but normatively inaccurate; pursuit of a good may have led to negative consequences; but normatively, this does not show that it is intrinsically bad. Not all that has been a source of negative historical events must be vicious by definition. Taylor tries to preserve and reflect the tension and complexity of reality itself, its dialectic nature, to put it in philosophical terms. This is the same *tone* that I have adopted in my own proposal.

I do not affirm that liberal projects regarding diversity and plurality are wrong and should be abandoned. What I have claimed through this text is that the liberal perspective provides an important but incomplete picture of current diversity problems; it is right in some contexts, makes fair points in others, and we should definitely pursue it. However, this is not enough. We have to go beyond the simplistic criticism that tries to sweep aside modernity and all of its expressions; but we also need to engage, as Taylor did, in understanding its origin and assumptions. Otherwise, the complexity of matters will remain out of sight.

> …those who condemn the fruits of disengaged reason in technological society or political atomism make the world simpler than it is when they see their opponents as motivated by a drive to "dominate nature" or to deny all dependence on others, and in fact conveniently occlude the complex connections in the modern understanding of the self between disengagement and self-responsible freedom and individual rights, or those between instrumental reason and the affirmation of ordinary life. Those who flaunt the most radical denials and repudiations of selective facets of the modern identity generally go on living by variants of what they deny. (Taylor, 1989:504)

Moving on in this line of reasoning, according to Taylor, identity refers to our *understanding* of who we are. Identity '…designates something like a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being.' (1994:25) This definition sets the tone for his overall project. He is particularly concerned to show that the horizons in which we make sense of

ourselves are the foundations for human agency. The connexion between identity and agency is perhaps not so clear and so far, I have not emphasised it enough, although agency has been a constant topic in the text. I saved the proper discussion of agency until now because it makes sense for my argument in the ontological sphere. For instance, the link between identity and agency is present when Kymlicka proposes group-differentiated rights protecting culture as a way to provide minorities with a *context of choice* or in the intercultural tension between cultural preservation and individual agency. In the context we are moving in now, it is traditionally believed that an important part of that individuality relies on the possibility of agency. In different terms:

> To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand. (Taylor, 1989:27)

From Taylor's definition of identity, we can derive two ideas. First, there is great merit in Taylor's fastening identity to the deeper ontological ground. Contrary to more pragmatic and utilitarian views of identity, he believes it cannot be reduced to the fragmentation of the different attachments that individuals and/or groups might, legitimately or not, develop. Instead, identity is the ground providing the meaningful basis upon which we can exercise our agency. In other words, the attachments we might have, and that are usually thought to constitute the different faces of our *complex* identity -nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, ideology, class and any other category allowing a feeling of belonging or existential attachment- are not exactly chosen freely, instead, they are the background providing meaning to our choices.

The second consequence of the definition is that it allows us to directly link identity and recognition. Part of our identity is shaped by the recognition or misrecognition of others, which is Taylor's main argument in the *Politics of Recognition* (1994). If our identity is what allows us to understand who we are, how we are and where we stand, then it is completely plausible that recognition, or the lack thereof, plays an important part in the way we understand ourselves. The self-image we adopt does not come entirely from us; it is importantly shaped by others. In more particular terms, as a result of this relationship, we can affirm that the modern understanding of individual identity and recognition mutually condition one another, not just ontologically, but also historically. In the case of modernity, the

inward, individualised subject pre-configures the dominant ways in which recognition could happen; in modern times, we are driven to believe that identification and recognition are inwardly generated because the dominant notion of our 'true' self is condensed in the notion of authenticity -everyone has a very original way of being-.[102] Finally, we can affirm that in terms of content, our identity is complex and unfathomable.

> We are all framed by what we see as universally valid commitments (…) and also by what we understand as particular identifications. We often declare our identity as defined by only one of these, because this is what is salient in our lives, or what is put in question. But in fact our identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it.' (Taylor, 1989:29)

I mention one more notion developed by Taylor before moving on to a more detailed assessment of his theory: his notion of dialogue. Without a doubt, one of Taylor's best-known ideas is the dialogic construction of identity.[103] Despite the radical individuality present in modern ways of life and behaviour, Taylor points out that in reference to identity its construction is dialogical. 'This crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally *dialogical* character. We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression.' (Taylor, 1994:32) Here is another of Taylor's brilliant distinctions: he would claim that opinions, reflections, and basically agency is individual indeed. He does not deny the quality of individuality in those processes. However, as long as identity is not our agency but what sustains it, it is possible that agency remains individual while identity is dialogically constructed. There is no need to go further and say that our agency is dialogic, which could be a difficult thesis to support. There is not even a need to say that our identity is only dialogically constructed to fight harder against radical individual identity. Parts of our identity can be only accessed individually and other parts are dialogic. Put simply, the *construction* of our identity is a dialogical process, but as far as Taylor defines identity in terms of self-understanding, part of it is secured in the individual sphere. Our identity is both, individual and collective, without further contradiction.

From my perspective, here is where some liberal thinkers are caught in the

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[102] Taylor traces back the modern notion of authenticity to a shift of the moral goods proposed by Rousseau and Herder. I do not discuss this in detail. For my argument, highlighting the relation between identity and recognition suffices.

[103] According to Frans Meijers and Hubert Hermans (2018) The tradition of *Dialogical Self Theory* can be traced to George Herbert Mead (2015 [1934]) and Williams James (1890). A description of this theory can be found in (Hermans, 2003)

trap and believe this dialogic nature of identity construction goes against individual freedom.[104] This is the same reason why communitarianism is also a liberal theory. Communitarians can sustain the liberal principle of individual freedom -agency- and embrace the dialogic character of our determinations. Our *understanding* of what is good or bad, valuable or worthless is shaped importantly by dialogue and interaction with others. In the process of constructing something as personal as understanding and situating ourselves in the world, we can perceive the presence of the significant other. Contrary to what we usually expect, Taylor is suggesting that the inwardly individualised identity needs the other to be reaffirmed,[105] that is, it needs the recognition given by the significant other to find its place in the world, so to speak. We do not become recluses outside of the world by turning to our self-consciousness, even then the other is there, at least in these ontological terms. Our 'dependence' on the other reaches our individual self without nullifying it.

> We are of course expected to develop our own opinions, outlook, stances toward things, and to a considerable degree through solitary reflection. But this is not how things work with important issues, like the definition of our identity. We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. (Taylor, 1994:32-33)

Taylor's effort to go beyond the individualised identity has great merit. Amongst others like Levinas or Benjamin, he helped to pave the way for the rest of us who believe there must be a new form of humanism, a humanism of the other. However, I will argue in the next section that some of his ideas fall short.

8.3 Assessing goods: the existential dimension of identity

The complexity of the relation between identity and agency would be particularly evident in one limit case: when someone wants to revise and question why she should follow an end or to accept a value embraced by the group, especially if those values and ends are so fundamental they denote the specificity of the community. In consequence, the debate revolves around questions of how it is possible for someone to criticise her deepest assumptions, mostly because those

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[104] Particularly cosmopolitan liberals tend to find it difficult to accept this.

[105] The significance of this is affirmation can be perceived by contrasting it with the radical individualised self and the way it has shaped modernity. Robin Williams in his analysis of modern identity affirms: 'The Cartesian self is independent of social relations, which are of secondary significance as objects to which attention may be given. It is also independent of material relations since, while the body functions as a necessary container for mind and its

assumptions help her to shape and make sense of the criticism in the first place. In fact, this is another expression of the debate I presented in Chapter 7, that of cosmopolitan versus communitarian. Nevertheless, in this case, the tone is different because we know that our agency is safe despite our identity being shaped by those attachments we try to question. In general terms, I believe liberal thinkers like Kymlicka are right when they claim that no matter the particular culture to which we belong, we always should be able to assess our conceptions of the good and ends. However, I disagree with their tendency to overemphasis agency over identity.

If we consider the big picture, it is clear that for every culture its understanding of the good changes over time, that is, it is historical. Consequently, we have good reasons to believe that we are somehow able to effectively criticise our assumptions, otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain how they change with the passage of time, which is a matter of fact. It is unlikely that changing from one idea of the good to others or modifying it could be result of random variation or drift. However, other explanations fit with the fact we are able to criticise our assumptions. The dialectical structure that would allow us to explain there is no priority of agency over identity is more complex than we might think. I will try to describe a possible solution to this later in the chapter. Meanwhile, I simply focus on the way liberal scholars explain this change, first and foremost because it is a key issue in liberal theories of plurality.

The argument works on two different levels not always clearly differentiated. When we claim that our perception of the good changes over time, we mostly refer to the collective understanding. On the contrary, when liberal scholars think about the basic ability to question particular goods, no matter how fundamental they are, they usually frame this concern from the individual perspective. Due to this, they find the criticism's origin in unpredictable circumstances or experiences leading us to reconsider our assumptions, but not necessarily in the structure of historical change. It is clear that in all cases, any historical change of our 'collective' perception of the good requires individuals expressing particular concerns. However, I want to argue that this does not mean that individuals are somehow independent of those values they want to scrutinise, even when they go against them!

No matter how radical the experience leading us to revise our assumptions, we cannot break entirely with the framework in which they are rooted, which would

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activities, it cannot be known in the way that I can know my thinking self. (2000:15)

be like asking to judge from nowhere or to jump from one framework to another.[106] As individuals, we can openly deny something and simultaneously be shaped by it, we can deny the religion in which we were raised and nevertheless be shaped by it. Of course, this goes beyond the limits of our agency, which is the main issue for liberal theories. But it does not go beyond the limits of our identity. The belief that we deny several times is still part of our being, shaping us in different ways. Our freedom is attached to the context in which we exercise it, and even if we can question and change important parts of that horizon, there are some other parts that escape our direct influence. For this reason, we have to expand the concept of identity not just to the ends, values or goods that we willingly accept, but to all the things shaping our *being,* including the internalisation of external things. Identity includes our understanding of who we are, how we are and where we stand, but it cannot be reduced to it. This is where I think Taylor's effort to find its limit. I explain this hereinafter.

I mentioned above that, in my opinion, one of the virtues of Taylor's approach corresponds to the way he makes space for the plurality of goods, underlining the complexity of the human situation. He is particularly interested in goods related to religion and secularism but his notion can be expanded to other

[106] A recurrent criticism of some forms of liberalism, particularly cosmopolitanism, refers to its aspiration of judging from nowhere. I have already discussed this idea and its flaws. Nevertheless, this is not the perspective of the liberal thinkers I am referring to here. However, it is worth pointing out a parallel problem which has attracted a significant amount of attention in the apparently distant discipline of philosophy of science: incommensurability of paradigms. If we concede, *mutatis mutandis*, this is a similar case to the one I am presenting at least in structure; we can find a similar way to support what I argue here. In Kuhn's understanding, a paradigm is what provides every scientist with the language and the view of the world to make sense of the phenomena she investigates. Without them, there is no possible way to do science. This notion of paradigm is quite close to what the other philosophical tradition calls horizon or being-in-the-world. Even those circumstances that in the liberal account might push us to question our conceptions of the good are similar to the ideas of anomaly and crisis in Kuhn's account. In principle, there is nothing that might completely prevent a change of paradigm occurring and the fundamental assumptions can be questioned; history would confirm this is not just possible, but the case. If there are the conditions in which someone can experience a crisis, then the commitment to the principles can clearly decrease. However, it is hard to explain the switch from one paradigm to other without any middle ground. That would imply a lack of continuity between one paradigm and the next one, or what is known as the incommensurability problem. Derek Phillips identifies and proposes an alternative understanding to this problem. He says: 'Kuhn makes too little of the possibility of someone being able to see something in one way and, *at the same time*, maintaining the capacity to see it "as" something else, the "something else" being the way he used to see it within the old paradigm. What I have tried to suggest above, in short, is that different paradigms need not be incommensurable, at least not for that individual who has moved from one to another and has the experience of both.' (1975:55) The ability to see something as in the old paradigm denotes that something from the old framework remains even when the aim of the new paradigm is question it. This conclusion parallels my own

goods. The basic idea draws on the criticism of the instrumental and naturalist tone behind the modern -liberal- understanding of identity. Alternatively, he affirms that goods as a source of the modern self are meaningful in the rich sense of the term, that is, they have not just semantical but also existential significance. The meaning that we give to actions, particularly decision, go beyond the self-interested calculation between different options. In other words, our agency is embedded in a more complex existential device than the direct expression of will and reason. Taylor names the context in which our actions have existential implications for our self *strong evaluation*.

> The point of introducing the distinction between strong and weak evaluation is to contrast the different kinds of self that each involves. (…) The strong evaluator envisages his alternatives through a richer language. The desirable is not only defined for him by what he desires, or what he desires plus a calculation of consequences; it is also defined by a qualitative characterization of desires as higher and lower, noble and base, and so on. (…) In other words, the reflection of the simple weigher terminates in the inarticulate experience that A is more attractive than B (Taylor, 1985b:23-24).

The particular case of being able to question our values and beliefs, which liberals find of great importance, becomes in Taylor's perspective a matter of choosing between goods. He fights the delusion of self-sufficiency of the individual in atomist doctrines, showing that we develop our human capacities by belonging to a society. In consequence, Taylor advocates a form of strong identity, even if he does not call it such: '…the identity of the autonomous, self-determining individual requires a social matrix' (Taylor, 1985a:209). The difference between his idea of identity and the one I propose here is not that mine is strong and his is weak; the difference is that he still considers identity primarily as our self-understanding, while I propose to extend it to our whole being. Nonetheless, emphasising strong evaluations and using them to unveil the nature of our freedom allows us to access identity's existential dimension.

I will not discuss Taylor's concept of strong evaluation in detail.[107] However, I follow his fundamental intuition.

> Taylor's position implies, for example, that it is impossible to give an adequate account of human agency that excludes any description that bears on the significance of things for human beings. (…) agency cannot be made intelligible from a perspective that homogenizes human motivation.' (Meijer, 2014:442-43)

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argument.

[107] Those interested in a detailed and critical account of the concept can consult Michiel Meijer's book, *Charles Taylor's Doctrine of Strong Evaluation*. (2017)

For my purposes, this fundamental notion of the significance of things is enough to advance this line of reasoning. As we can expect, this particular case is embedded, if there were any possible hierarchy, within the deepest *existential* instances of human agency. To select or to question the fundamental assumptions are not matters in which is possible to have a weak evaluation. To choose between goods is not only an instance in which the strong evaluator is pushed to the deep[108] reflection described by Taylor, but it actually becomes a dilemma, an existential dilemma. And '…a dilemma does not invalidate the rival goods. On the contrary, it presupposes them.' (1989:511)

Therefore, for my argument, the first concern is to situate agency in the right perspective. Taylor's distinction already prevents us from placing the evaluation of goods, values and ultimately important 'parts' of our identity in the realm of the weak evaluation pattern. But perhaps this is not enough, we should acknowledge the distinctiveness of the case.

Every time we truly, critically appraise our cultural goods, we jeopardise something deeper than our freedom to choose, we risk our being.[109] This is where liberal approaches fall somewhat short in their account, even Taylor. He takes a step further with the distinction between strong and weak evaluations, endorsing a *stronger* idea of identity than pragmatic -atomistic- liberal stands. His argument centres on society's necessity for developing human potentials, including rationality, morality and autonomy. In consequence, '…freedom requires a certain understanding of self, one in which the aspirations to autonomy and self-direction become conceivable; and (…) our identity is always partly defined in conversation with others or through the common understanding which underlies the practices of

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[108] 'A strong evaluator, by which, we mean a subject who strongly evaluates desires, goes deeper, because he characterizes his motivation at greater depth.' (Taylor, 1985b:25)

[109] There is a long existential tradition that focuses on this particular case. In the opinion of important existentialist philosophers, the foundations of freedom are better perceived in the breakdown of our known world. Different existential states are proposed as the context for this breakdown: anxiety (Heidegger, 1962), absurdity (Camus, 1991), or even nothingness (Sartre, 1957). The idea that freedom emerges from an existential situation in which I do not know who I am or I lose my known place in the world, is recurrent. However, even if this supports the relation between an existential state, agency and identity, it implies other kind of assumptions that I cannot explicate here, such as the idea that you have to lose yourself completely, instead of partially. When it comes to questioning your deepest assumptions, I make the case for a partial existential crisis.
To keep the ideas on the same track, it is enough to mention that Taylor also recognises this existential arrangement and its relations to identity. Close to this perspective, amongst the existentialist philosophers, Gabriel Marcel's concepts of mystery and secondary reflection (1950) better support our effort to acknowledge an exceptional significance for the existential place in the case we described, without compromising other ontological assumptions.

our society.' (Taylor, 1985a:209) However, the existential context of identity can be pushed further than what Taylor did, beyond strong evaluation, even beyond agency. But this argument must pay homage to its predecessors who paved the way before ploughing forward.

Multiculturalism's advocates are aware of the importance of cultural attachments for the members of a community. They recognise how meaningful those attachments are and consider them as objects of strong evaluations.

> People make choices about the social practices around them, based on their beliefs about the value of these practices (beliefs which, I have noted, may be wrong). And to have a belief about the value of a practice is, in the first instance, a matter of understanding the meanings attached to it by our culture.'(Kymlicka, 1995:83)[110]

However, the kind of special case we are dealing with here, in which bits of our identity can be questioned, demands a special place within strong evaluations. To say it differently, there is a *qualitative* leap between having a belief about the value of a practice on the grounds of the cultural meanings attached, and seriously questioning and revising those values and beliefs.

That being said, someone might question why this particular case is so important and why we do not simply focus on the norm rather than the exception. The answer is because this particular case is the key to explaining historical changes in the conception of goods. It also help us to understand how we question our cultural values, and exercise agency. '…individuals have an autonomy interest in protecting the "structure" of their culture from potential external threats, but the same autonomy interest permits, and indeed requires, allowing that the "character" of their culture change in accordance with the choices of members.' (Kymlicka, 2016:69) And we are caught once again embroiled in the same issue: the fundamental relation between agency and identity.

In more particular terms, Kymlicka's concept of societal culture (1989, 1995), which defines culture mainly as a context of choice, denotes the usual relation between agency and identity from the liberal perspective. In essence, the notion affirms that the culture of groups should be protected because it provides options and meanings for the choices through which we express our individual freedom. 'For

[110] There is an interesting finding to share here. Kymlicka has demonstrated successfully, at least in my opinion, that liberalism is not necessarily a form of cosmopolitanism (Kymlicka, 1989, 2016). In other words, liberalism is compatible with the social thesis, and it is not individualistic. This corresponds to the confirmation of strong attachments to culture. However, when he engages with issues of individual agency in the context of cultural attachments, there is no qualitative differentiation between our choices.

meaningful individual choice to be possible, individuals need not only access to information, the capacity to reflectively evaluate it, and freedom of expression and association. They also need access to a societal culture.' (Kymlicka, 1995:84) However, despite the refinement this represents in the understanding of culture's importance in the liberal tradition, two relevant comments must be voiced.

First, there is a *functional* consideration whereby culture is a condition without which agency cannot happen, but without any phenomenological, factual account of culture as a shaper of our identity. In other words, without a culture, there would not be ground on which choosing meaningfully, but this is slightly different than affirming every individual is already determined by her culture; in a way, she *always* mediates the meanings through it.[111] Second, in the concept of societal culture, there is a little distance between culture as a context of choice and the factual agency of individuals. Such distance does not exist in culture as a horizon, because every individual *is* already unavoidably in-the-world. In Kymlicka's definition, culture is considered a condition of possibility in the same sense Kant intended, that is, *a priori*.

From my standpoint, this distance results from liberal theories' legitimate concerns to secure the *possibility* of accepting or denying our own societal culture Simply put, it is the consequence of preventing an essentialist -fixed- culture in which agency would have no say.[112] Either way, the difficulties of explaining agency in relation to the cultural context move away from focusing on agency and its relations, to examining the conditions that are necessary for its appearance. Perhaps an example would help clarify the matter. Kymlicka affirms:

> A liberal society not only allows individuals the freedom to pursue their existing faith, but it also allows them to seek new adherents for their faith (proselytization is allowed), or to question the doctrine of their church (heresy is allowed), or to renounce their faith entirely and convert to another faith or to atheism (apostasy is allowed). *It is quite conceivable to have the freedom to pursue one's current faith without having any of*

[111] If I am allowed to draw an analogy, we can think about language itself. There is a difference between saying that we cannot express anything without a language, which is its material and contextual condition, and saying language is actually shaping the possible outcomes of our expressions.

[112] I think there is some utility in stepping back to more fundamental grounds. It is interesting to see how an attempt to move beyond essentialism and secure agency -revising our ends and goods- has become a target of the same claim of being essentialist. Kymlicka's concept of societal culture has been criticised for promoting essentialism: 'It is my concept of societal culture, Benhabib claims, that "potentially legitimises repressive demands for cultural conformity", that puts cultures "beyond the reach of critical analysis", and that entails "acceptance of the need to "police" [group] boundaries to regulate internal membership and "authentic" life forms"' Similarly, Appiah argues that my concept of societal culture "may entail imposing uniformity" within groups…' (Kymlicka, 2015:221-22)

> *these latter freedoms.* (…) A liberal society, by contrast, not only allows people to pursue their current way of life, but also gives them access to information about other ways of life (through freedom of expression), and indeed requires children to learn about other ways of life (through mandatory education), and makes it possible for people to engage in radical revision of their ends (including apostasy) without legal penalty. These aspects of a liberal society only make sense on the assumption that revising one's ends is possible, and sometimes desirable, because one's current ends are not always worthy of allegiance. A liberal society does not compel such questioning and revision, but it does make it a genuine possibility. (1995:82)[113]

Although it is clear in what sense liberal societies provide the conditions for individuals to express their religious *freedom*, there is no further reflection on the existential context in which this actually happens. This is the core of the second comment I made: the idea of societal culture as a context of choice can be complemented by culture as the existential ground of our identity. It is not one or the other, but both. Kymlicka accepts that we can pursue our goods and ends even without securing the political -almost material- conditions provided by the liberal context. To affirm the opposite would be extremely difficult to support: in that case, we might be saying that only in the liberal situation we can legitimately pursue goods and ends. There are important nuances we must take into account. Pursuing goods and ideals entails a historical struggle that may not succeed.

In that sense, efforts to secure the political conditions for the largest amount of goods and ends are without a doubt laudable. Political recognition is indeed a way to foster diversity and plurality, but it just secures the conditions in one dimension of a more complex phenomenon. We would get into a deep and probably worthless predicament if we try to discern what a genuine possibility is, one that has secured the political and social conditions or the one that has facilitated the existential ones. The point is that these aims are not contradictory, but complementary.

My criticism refers not to the notion of societal culture itself, but in the last instance, to the lack of emphasis on the existential dimension of identity and agency. The conditions that Kymlicka mentions as those facilitating the *radical*[114] revision of our ends -access to information, education and so on- work perfectly fine where there is a choice to be made on everyday issues, but not in the *radical* criticism of our ends and goods. To say it another way, these are not matters of

[113] Emphasis supplied
[114] Cf. the last quote.

informed decision, but of existential crisis.[115] To question our ends and goods is always a dilemma in which we struggle to find our place in the world and where things do not make much sense anymore. 'It's what we call an "identity crisis", an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand. They lack a frame or horizon within which things can take on a stable significance,' (Taylor, 1989:27) In these instances, having all the information and conditions to choose at hand is of secondary importance.

We have to insist on the existential context of our agency and individuality, especially in those instances in which we question our goods and ends. Even if liberals might accept that matters as important as our faith or the lack thereof are linked to strong evaluations, there is something missing in the picture of a societal culture as simply a context of choice.[116] We have to complete the puzzle.

8.4 Towards a humanism of the other: expanding the limits of modern identity

Beyond the over-individualised subjectivity, beyond the inward identity, there is a door to a new kind of humanism: *a humanism of the other and the related politics of difference-identity.* As a way to make room for my own proposal, I have critically considered the notion of an individualised, self-contained human being and the modern humanist perspectives driving liberal theories of diversity. I cannot affirm

[115] Referring again to the parallel case of scientific revolution, I would say that a paradigm switch, which is the equivalent of questioning our end and goods in our case, is not a matter of having different options available. Being aware of the information and choosing one paradigm over the other is not an exercise in rational evaluation. Instead, it comes from a *crisis* that pushes scientists to question the old paradigm. In other words, we do not question our assumptions in periods of normal science, but only in a critical state. 'Paradigms are not corrigible by normal science at all. Instead, as we have already seen, normal science ultimately leads only to the recognition of anomalies and to crises. And these are terminated, not by deliberation and interpretation, but by a relatively sudden and unstructured event like the gestalt switch.' (Kuhn, 2012:122) As with the scientific revolution, the criticism of our goods and values cannot come from any place other than an essential -existential- incompatibility in which phenomena stop making sense.

[116] Kymlicka affirms: 'No matter how confident we are about our ends at a particular moment, new circumstances or experiences may arise, often in unpredictable ways, that cause us to re-evaluate them. There is no way to predict in advance when the need for such a reconsideration will arise. As I noted earlier, a liberal society does not compel people to revise their commitments —and many people will go years without having any reason to question their basic commitments— but it does recognize that the freedom of choice is not a one-shot affair, and that earlier choices sometimes need to be revisited.' (Kymlicka, 1995:91-92) What I can add to this idea, which I think is right, is the special existential tone of the

that modern humanism is the *natural* consequence of the inward individualised subject, nor can I assert that we are condemned to suffer the nihilist consequences of a post-modern world, but I can say that it cannot be the only humanism possible. For instance, Taylor himself engaged in such an important endeavour (1989, 1994). Unfortunately, despite his immense efforts and contributions to building such a project, his proposal falls short in the sense that even his alternative fails to reach the core of the individualised modern identity he described in such detail.[117] His proposal on how *the other* dialogically helps us to constitute our own self focuses more on the politics of difference than on the humanism of the other. The same happens to Parekh's attempt to describe a three-dimensional identity and its dialectical interaction (2008), which very soon lands in the political sphere. They fix attention more on the political than the ontological consequences of modern identity, which is completely understandable because of the socio-political nature of their interests.

My view is still a kind of *humanism* even if a 'new kind'. It retains some aspects of the old humanisms while developing a new aspect. In order to clarify this, it is important to keep in mind the most criticised features of the modern subject are related to the overconfidence in individuality and its derived certitude about progress and rationality. Although the criticism of these features is accurate in many respects, I deny its most destructive conclusions. We should pursue a new humanism, an inclusive humanism not centred on the loneliness of the individual; at the same time, we cannot simply surrender to the temptation of dissolving any kind of subjectivity, instead, we must push towards a different kind of subjectivity. This *divided consciousness* is already present in the work of at least two prominent figures: Charles Taylor and Emmanuel Levinas. Taylor indicates that the *consequences* of modern identity cannot be fully realised: 'A total and fully consistent subjectivism would tend towards emptiness: nothing would count as a self-fulfilment in a world in which literally nothing was important but self-fulfilment.' (1989:507) In the same way, Levinas asserts that

> As a setting into place of intelligible structures, subjectivity would have no internal finality. We are witnessing the ruin of the myth of man an end in himself, and the appearance of an order that is neither human nor inhuman, one that is, indeed, ordered across man and across the

circumstances and experiences he mentions.

[117] I do not claim that my proposal is going to succeed where Taylor's failed. It is more an effort sharing the same aim. As happened in the case of the modern self, a new form of humanism can only emerge in the context of historical process shaped dialectically and in constant struggle.

> civilizations he is said to have produced, but ordered in the last analysis by the properly rational force of the dialectical or logic—formal system.' (1986:130)

In former sections, I developed some comments on Taylor's approach. By doing this, I began to make my own voice heard. My small contribution to the debates on plurality and diversity starts here, in the moment where I gain some distance from Taylor's theory. As I said before, Taylor's tone and general approach to modern identity are correct; he criticises reductionist -atomistic- notions of the modern self, opening the door for a definition of strong identity. My small contribution is more a matter of nuance and completion than fundamental disagreement. The argument is developed enough to affirm his definition of identity as useful in multiple ways, especially when we engage in the struggle for political recognition, his effort to set frameworks or horizons as the context in which we make sense of ourselves is even more profitable. However, it does not include other aspects outside the constructed dimension of our being that are, nevertheless, part of who we are. A definition of strong identity will allow us to further explain the organic unity in which agency and self-understanding take place. It is Taylor who unveiled that '…since the free individual can only maintain his identity within a society/culture of a certain kind, he has to be concerned about the shape of this society/culture as a whole.' (Taylor, 1985a:207) As a complement, we have also to be concerned about the shape of the individual as a whole and not only in relation to agency and self-understanding. Hereinafter I develop some reasons to expand identity beyond the limits of agency and understanding, though their inclusion in the analysis of identity is Taylor's major contribution.

First, I think it is important to emphasise again the consequences of Taylor's analysis and definition of identity, particularly in relation to the problem of agency. Clearly, for Taylor, there is no agent outside frameworks; these are needed to exercise any form of freedom of choice. '…it belongs to human agency to exist in a space of questions about strongly valued goods, prior to all choice or adventitious cultural change.' (Taylor, 1989:31) A similar idea is expressed by philosophers close to phenomenology, from Heidegger (1962) to Merleau-Ponty (2013), whose notions of *being-in-the-world, être au monde,* or *horizon* support the idea that we are always in a context which is already meaningful. The *world* is the source of meaning. The same way Taylor's concept of agency is anchored in moral frameworks, Merleau-Ponty believes we find significance in the intuitive coherence of situations and events *before* we might find it in the semantic content; Heidegger shows the world

always opens up to the *Dasein* -human being- as meaningful because of her particular cultural heritage; and Gadamer affirms that our hermeneutical consciousness is nothing but the awareness of the historical structure of our understanding. Taylor names it *framework*, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Gadamer call it *horizon,* but it is the same fundamental intuition. If the horizon sets the limits of what shapes us, then the continued form of this shaping configures our particular biography.

As one important aspect of our identity, our biography might help us to include events from our past that clearly shaped us in the particular way we are and, therefore, that are legitimately part of our being. For instance, we can mention Giddens' influential idea of self-identity as the *understanding* each individual has in terms of her biography (1991). And although this widens identity in the temporal dimension, it is still not enough to cover all our being. Identity is not just about our understanding of the past, but also includes the things has happened to us and remain beyond our understanding. It is true that what happened to us in the past might be considered through the understanding of our current self, but we cannot try to pretend to cover all our past. With the concept of our biography, the notion of identity expands in time. Even more, those past events that shaped us can easily include things outside the sphere of our agency, acknowledging we are also shaped by what happens to us and we cannot but passively go through.

Just to illustrate the kind of events I have in mind and that are usually included in our biography, we can think of the loss of someone who was an important part of our life.[118] Clearly, I am moving away from the concerns of the liberal theories of securing agency and Taylor's moral worries, which are also legitimate uses of identity that have to be included in a strong form. In this way, we can see that our identity includes more parts than just those freely and rationally chosen to construct our identity. Although writers like Taylor and Giddens attempt to expand the concept of identity, by binding it with our understanding they still place restrictions on it.

While unveiling why understanding is considered to be such an important notion is beyond my present scope, I will share a plausible guess. Coupling our identity with our understanding is plausible in many ways but limiting.

From the most general perspective, where identity refers to any possible

[118] This denotes that our identity is shaped by the dialogue and interaction with others, by their recognition and misrecognition, but also by what might happen to others.

object and not just to human identity, there has been a persistent effort to explain it through its core properties of continuity and unity. The identity of any possible object has been explained through qualitative and spatiotemporal continuity, persistence and unity (Hirsch, 1982). These features are crucial for the modern notion of identity, from Descartes to Hegel, and from there to more recent approaches, including Giddens'. Robin Williams expresses how the ontological features of identity are coupled with ideas such as coherence and understanding.

> The view of identity held in these kinds of theories, then, continues to resonate with Cartesian and Lockean accounts in so far as they understand identity ideally as both firmly located and unitary. These accounts direct us to find our identities through the realisation of coherence and continuity in our understandings of ourselves as subjects, albeit subjects who live in specific societies and in particular forms of relationships within social institutions. The mechanism that generates these identities remains a subjective one based on each individual's concern with coherence and consistency within her or his actions and feelings over time and across social contexts. (2000:48)

There are many reasons why *understanding* is so tightly linked to identity. I believe the connexion can be explained through the notions of consciousness and coherence, both at the core of modern subjectivity. What we know is that the conditions of continuity and unity were translated, through modern subjectivity, into consciousness and coherence as the means to secure access to our self and to hold it together. Then, our identity became inseparable from our understanding of it. In the context of the influential Cartesian self (Descartes, 1968), when Descartes suspends the world -ἐποχή- to find he is essentially a thinking thing -*Cogito ergo sum*-, self-knowledge becomes the only thing we can be sure of. 'The self knows itself, it knows its own identity, in and through this set of essentially private cognitive operations. Personal identity is therefore essentially and only located "within" each person's unique self — and the self and its identity can be known by us directly.' (R. Williams, 2000:15)

The criticism of this idea is vast. Taylor himself shows that our identity cannot be completely locked within each person, but is also dialogically constructed. Nonetheless, he holds the notion that understanding is the privileged way to access our self. There are some remnants of Cartesian intellectualism.[119] Despite their rejection of this intellectualism, when analysing identity, most of the critics still believe we are mainly a thinking thing and there are no other ways to access our

[119] There are valuable efforts to expand the idea of understanding beyond what is strictly rational. Reasoning and evaluating can be emotional and dialogic. (Burkitt, 2010) However, my claim is not exactly that different ways to understand our selves exist, but that identity

being than rationality. This is the point where we have to stipulate identity as something more than just self-understanding; it is the point where constructing of a notion of strong identity starts. Adapting Merleau-Ponty's fundamental intuition that affirms 'The world is not what I think, but what I live' (2013:¦xxx) I can say that *I am not what I understand of myself, but what I live as myself.* The assumption that our agency is mainly attached to our reason also persists. In any case, even if our understanding were the main means we use to access our identity, we cannot conflate them. Even if we grant that we cannot access our being but through consciousness and this leads us immediately to the understanding of ourselves, the access and our identity are different. Otherwise, we will be supporting a strong idealist perspective of ourselves. It is in the ontological ground where we find basic assumptions that later become a claim for individualised, pragmatic and atomised views of identity.

In the same way, identity does not only refer to what we are as the result of our agency, that is, to what we choose and embrace or to what we consciously deny. *First and foremost, identity refers to our being, as a whole, as the unity that allows us to say we are identical to ourselves and as the continuity that explains what we are in each moment as a result of what we have been before.* This means that our identity is indivisible, in the same way as the succession of episodes forming what we are in each particular time is indivisible. Our being is more than the sum of the attachments, decisions, feelings, projects and any other 'part' we might include, it is the articulation of all of them. By focusing on agency, Taylor placed the *constructed* character of our being centre stage. But as I said above, we are more than the decisions we constantly make. To say it directly: our being is larger than our agency; it includes more than our decisions, it includes more than our constructed character. Even though, as I show now, agency is very important to our being, we will also see that identity goes beyond this.

It is true there are determinants or data -in the Latin sense of the term referring to what is directly given- we can try to navigate differently and modify, including our social class, economic status, religion, gender and many others; but there are other ones which are more difficult to deal with in terms of our agency, such as ethnicity/race, history or language. It seems that the first group allow us to move between different instances within the categories. In other words, we can imagine belonging to one social class at one time in our lives and to a different one

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includes even those corners where no possible understanding can reach.

in another time. However, in the second group, it seems this is not possible. It is not so easy to imagine how we could belong to one ethnicity one day and to another in a different time; it is hard to imagine not just what might need to happen, but how this could be even possible. We can imagine there is one person who has one parent who identifies with one ethnic group and another parent who identifies with another, she might change her sense of "allegiance" over time for personal or cultural reasons emphasising alternatively one or the other. However, despite having more choices from the beginning, including to consider herself mixed, it seems unlikely she can assume an ethnicity outside these default options. Nevertheless, all the cases can be legitimately considered social constructions.[120] I would not claim any of those categories is natural.

Additionally, our agency and consciousness can engage in diverse ways with them, to the extent that it seems there are no determinants agency cannot deal with. I already discussed above the issue of being able to criticise our deepest goods and ends, which is a more detailed expression of this philosophical intuition. This possibility of engagement also explains why belonging is so important as the correlative of identity. In other words, the world and our self are both constructed -non-natural-, no doubt about it, which means that in principle we can change them as a result of our individual and collective agency. Besides we have good reasons to believe some matters that might seem the result of biological drivers, such as gender, are instead something constructed (Butler, 1999; De Beauvoir, 2015 [1972]). However, our being is still larger than all our possible constructions. Even when our identity is clearly constructed there are 'parts' in this construction that remain untouched while we change others. Let me try to clarify this.

Our being is constructed because we are able to shape ourselves, but it is also given because the construction is drawn from what is biologically, historically, existentially, intellectually, linguistically and morally available. It is not one or the other but both. *Our identity is given and constructed at the same time.* We can always be different, we can change, we can be better or worse people, we can follow certain practices or engage in different ones, we can believe in something and later change our mind. But all these possibilities are conditioned by the articulation of circumstances in which each event might happen. For this reason, I chose the term *strong identity*, mirroring Taylor's idea of *strong evaluation*, to emphasise that

[120] A clear reference in the way I understand social construction is to Berg and Luckmann's influential work *The Social Construction of Reality* (1979). My argument is very similar to

the construction of our self cannot be reduced to the pragmatic exercise of freedom. Taylor demonstrates that the notion of strong evaluation implies a kind of self provided with the depth of the context in which decisions become meaningful. 'Strong evaluation is not just a condition of articulacy about preferences, but also about the quality of life, the kind of beings we are or want to be. It is in this sense deeper.' (Taylor, 1985b:26) I take the core of the strong evaluation intuition beyond the realm of agency, and I place it directly in the sphere of being; this is where strong evaluation opens the door for strong identity.

Trying to name the conditions configuring the context would be trying to describe the world itself: class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, education, religion, family, character, psychological state, job, preferences and a very long etcetera. It is the summation of all these which in rigour configures our being because the unique articulation of all of them is what make us *beings of flesh and bone*.[121] We construct ourselves from what we have been given, we can change ourselves and the world, but we cannot create them from scratch, nor we can construct them entirely at once. As philosophers are fond of saying, Ex nihilo nihil fit. And this leads me to say plainly what I think is our ontological character: our being and identity are always in process. We are never finished, we can always decide differently and change ourselves. In consequence, we have to pay attention to two concomitant events, the process of our construction and the context in which it takes place, including relations to others.

8.5 The process of constructing ourselves: the articulation of the parts

In detail, we construct ourselves in a context that is already full of intentionalities and directionalities, that is, in a meaningful world. This is the context. In the same way, our being is a complex articulation; the world is also a junction in which meaning and directionality are already present. 'We must in fact understand in all of these ways at once; everything has a sense, and we uncover the same

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theirs. However, they still move within the limits of modern identity I try to overpass.

[121] Unamuno express this idea beautifully by saying: 'For there is another thing which is also called man, and he is the subject of not a few lucubrations, more or less scientific. He is the legendary featherless biped, the *ζῷον πολῑτῐκόν* of Aristotle, the social contractor of Rousseau, the *homo economicus* of the Manchester school, the *homo sapiens* of Linnaeus, or, if you like, the vertical mammal. A man neither of here nor there, neither of this age nor of another, who has neither sex not country, who is, in brief, merely an idea. That is to say, a no-man. The man we have to do with is the man of flesh and bone -I, you, reader of mine,

ontological structure beneath all of these relations. All of these views are true so long as they are not isolated,' (Merleau-Ponty, 2013:¦xxxiii). The complex articulations of the world and ourselves imply that our agency and the subsequent construction of ourselves become an endless process. A process in which we continuously change 'parts' and leave others, but always remaining as a meaningful articulation. *The real change and construction of ourselves are not decisions we make on particular matters, but the articulation of them as a meaningful whole.* Our experience, our life, is nothing but a particular way of articulating the world. Perhaps this could be clearer in an example.

A person living in this particular world can challenge the idea of biological determinism applied to gender, and she does it precisely because the world is configured in a way that allow us to believe this –there is a context in which it makes sense-, to perhaps assume it, and to act in consequence. It is not an isolated idea, but it works in a larger articulation on notions and contexts, from religion to biology. Then it is not so difficult to realise that engaging in such endeavours means that we have to change not just ourselves, but the world as well. Even more, it means that she has to adjust a lot of other things to make sense of her understanding of gender, from her religious beliefs -if any- to the political approaches. She can construct her identity by exercising agency in terms of gender and performing it differently. But she can do this only from the resources available, and in the way and to the extent it can be included in the larger articulation, that is, from the horizon in which this act of freedom 'makes sense' with the remaining determinants. A woman with different resources, with a different horizon, will construct her identity differently because the articulation would be different. In other words, she has a different experience.

Our identity includes what we have managed to change, what we are in the process of changing, what we could -or would- not change and what we have not tried to change yet. We can only construct ourselves by changing and remaining at the same time. Sometimes we are still being what we choose not to be because the process is often a struggle not resolved yet, some other times we changed, but in such a way that we cannot be sure exactly when or why we became who we are now. In every case, and I apologise in advance for the tautological expressions, *we are what we are,* at the same time we are what we are to others. In other words, we are more than what we can construct of ourselves. Again, it is not a matter of denying our construction in favour of the given, we are both. We can claim that the

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the other man yonder, all of us who walk solidly on the earth.' (1921:1)

important part of our identity is what we already have done with ourselves, and this is a legitimate claim. However, this is not all that we are, and at least for my argument, this is important because the other 'parts' also shape our being. 'My voluntary and rational life thus knows itself to be entangled with another power that prevents it from being completed and that always gives it the air of a work in progress.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2013:362) If so far I have succeeded in my aim, it would be a bit clearer that despite the inwardly individualised modern subject, there is more in our identity than just agency, consciousness and mind.

Let me try to connect this reflection with some cultural consequences and an idea of history. So far, I argued that agency and identity construction cannot imply a reboot of the whole articulation of relationships, but the continual process of partial reconfiguration. We cannot achieve a state of affairs in which all articulations would make sense providing the definite unity of the parts as if we constructed our self completely. In consequence, we keep changing, step by step. I have also described in a former section the problem of trying to question our ends and goods when we use them for such a critique. In this moment of the argumentation, I find it useful to call to mind this last idea because the apparently infinite regress also shows the dialectical nature of identity construction. The possibilities from which we can choose and that constitute our identity are meaningful only because there are frameworks or horizons in which they make sense but, at the same time, those frameworks have been partially *constructed* from our previous choices. We can only exercise our agency from a determined context, but we historically shape that context by exercising our agency.[122] These dynamics correspond to the movement of history.[123]

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[122] The process I try to describe follows the usual form of a dialectic relationship in which the elements co-create mutually through a continuous tension. Just to mention an example better known because of its significance, we can refer to Marx's idea of how the humanization of people happens by the mediation of work, that is, by transforming nature. '…natural man transforms nature with the help of nature, and this transformation in turn transforms his nature.' (Fetscher, 1973:451) More importantly, as Marx and Hegel bring to light, this structure explains history, change and human existence, which in my argument is very close to the notion of identity. 'Thus the *social* character is the general character of the whole movement: *just as* society itself produces *man as man*, so is society produced by him. (…) Thus *society* is the consummated oneness in substance of man and nature -the true resurrection of nature- the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfilment.' (Marx, 1988:104)

[123] It is a task for another project to go further on this relation between identity, diversity and history. But there are some perspectives pointing in this direction, Walter Benjamin's idea of history for instance. He says in the 6th thesis on the concept of history: 'Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it "the way it really was." It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. (…) Every age must strive anew to wrest

We construct our self historically in the ontological sense, not just because history is a determination influencing our current understanding of the present, but because we construct that same history by being in the world. That is why no meaning is ever fixed or absolutely determined, we can change them historically, at the same time that we are determined by the very same historicity. 'This amount to saying that we give history its sense, but not without history offering us that sense. The *Sinn-gebung* is not merely centrifugal, and this is why the individual is not the subject of history. There is an exchange between generalized existence and individual existence; both receive and both give.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2013:475-76) And if we are able to link individual identity construction with the collective formation of history, we can also do so with culture.

In cultural terms, I believe that a community can choose the same way an individual can. But more important is the adjustment of the articulations as a whole, the adaptations we have to assume to re-articulate the being of the community. In more specific terms, we can try another thought experiment and see that even if a non-liberal community chose to embrace particular liberal practices, there is more work in order to re-articulate those changes into the whole. *To break with particular practices is not to break with the culture itself.* In cultural terms, communities follow the same dynamics of endlessly adjusting in a unitary articulation of different parts that allow us to see it as a whole. Cultural communities do not act as a unity because their members follow or share values, goods or practices *in the same way*. Completely the opposite, members of a community can legitimately keep their membership despite the diverse -sometimes contradictory- interpretation of fundamental matters. *They are part of a community because they live the same articulation of events from similar horizons.* This other source of diversity, which we can call internal plurality, also configures the historical change at different scales.

Plurality cannot be reduced to a diversity of goods, values and ends, not even ideologies or economies, therefore, even in the case of a unique system and contrary to Francis Fukuyama's opinion (1992), there is no chance for the end of history, nor a last man. In their conflict and agreements, internal and external diversity provide the driving force for history. Within this larger picture of what a community is in historical terms, there are different ways to draw lines delimiting

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tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it.' (Benjamin, 1996:391) In the context of diversity, I find particularly interesting Modood's (2015) effort in widening national history beyond the history of the majority. In both cases history is something more than just traditional historiography.

communities and groups. That being said, there is no conflict between my account and the specific efforts to define communities focusing on particular features.

As I described above, when I discussed the complexity of identity, the particular features can be the visible face of a community or an individual for many reasons, but they are always 'part' of a complex unitary being. In fact, when I affirm members of the same community can have dissimilar ends and goals, this is not different from the definition of civic nation I analysed in Chapter 3. A citizen of a civic nation is not forced to follow any particular good or end, which is the foundation for plurality and diversity at this level. If democratic mediation between distinct concepts of the good is the only way for the State to deal with plurality that is a different issue. If in order to secure the conditions for a functional diversity we have to embrace liberal principles, it is also something debatable, but these issues do not contradict the account I am presenting. The diverse approaches I included in this text are, in a way, a corroboration of it. All of them are different interpretations of plurality, social cohesion, belonging, democracy and other values in the liberal tradition. They all share the horizon in which their coincidences and discrepancies keep history moving. Moreover, bluntly critiques also belong to the same tradition they criticise. There is no chance of a purely external critique. For instance, the efforts of Critical Race Theory scholars to question the liberal principles of equality and neutrality belong to the same tradition they criticise; they are not something coming from an alien context but from the core of liberal institutions.

Additionally, my criticism includes the liberal assumptions of my own formation and make sense as a critique only in relation to the liberal horizon. What we know as *liberalism,* in the inclusive sense of the term, is a political, ideological, and existential horizon as diverse as any other. Conflict and internal disagreement are a matter of fact and become a source of political diversity.

8.6 Conclusions

I would like to start this chapter's conclusions by emphasising Taylor's contributions to the discussion of identity and recognition. Following his work, we can affirm that modern identity is indeed an important assumption shaping conflicts in our culture and society. He shows that the connections between concepts and the world are real. Particularly, modern identity is a key idea behind our most mundane behaviours and understandings, as well as the most sophisticated ones. For this

reason, analysing the philosophical context in which modern identity appeared lets us appreciate how we understand and deal with diversity and plurality, particularly in the liberal context. Taylor also criticises what he thinks are disengaged and instrumental modes of thought and life, which was a source of inspiration for my claim that identity is more than our values and practices. He is right in denying the pragmatic perspective that hides behind weak evaluations. In this context, he is a pioneer of strong identity; he unveils how an understanding of self is necessary to exercise our freedom and how we can only maintain identity within a society or culture. Along with other philosophers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty or Gadamer, he emphasises that the cultural frameworks in which we make sense of ourselves and the world are the foundations for human agency. In other words, he allows us to contextualise the problems of identity in relation to agency. Moreover, he shows how there is always a moral and political content attached to or options and alternatives. Finally, we can mention his well-known idea that part of our identity is shaped by the recognition or misrecognition of others, which represents a complete paradigm shift regarding the Cartesian tradition of the self.

Moving on to what I was able to articulate in the chapter, I argued the idea that our identity is both individual and collective, without further contradiction. There is certainly a tension between them, but they are equally present in our being. Having a strong attachment to the values, beliefs and behaviours of a community neither prevents our agency nor denies the constructed character of ourselves. We can question our values, practices and behaviours even if we are very attached to them. However, no matter how radical the experience leading us to their revision, we cannot judge them outside the framework in which they make sense. Our freedom is attached to the context in which we exercise it, and even if we can question and change important parts of that horizon, there are some other parts that escape our direct influence. Moreover, the ability to question our identity has existential implications, it is not simply a matter of pragmatic or even rational choice. This is what I called the existential context identity.

Additionally, I endorsed the idea that in the process of constructing our identity there is already the significant other, as Levinas (and to a lesser extent, Taylor) affirms. This idea will allow developing a *humanism of the other,* which programmatic development should include the aims of expanding identity beyond the limits of agency and understanding, which implies accepting that *our identity is given and constructed at the same time.* In other words, a first step is to understand

identity as our being, but a being in a continuous process of change. Just like Theseus' ship we are in a process in which we continuously change parts of ourselves and leave others intact. However, the ship remains, we always remain as a meaningful articulation that allows us to say we are the same, that our identity is secured. The real change and construction of ourselves are not decisions on the particular matters we take, but the articulation of them as a meaningful whole.

Finally, I connected the individual with the collective construction of identity. We know that communities follow the same dynamics of endlessly adjusting in a unitary articulation of different parts. Therefore, I concluded that communities do not act in unity because their members follow or share values, goods or practices in the same way. Instead, they are part of a community because they live the same articulation of events from similar horizons. Some particular features can 'differentiate' a community or an individual for many reasons. However, they are always 'part' of a complex unitary being, which is *strictu sensu* the identity of the group. Now that I portrayed strong identity, I can briefly come back to the idea that minorities are claiming strong recognition and point out some possible solutions, although as I said at the beginning it is impossible for me to analyse it in depth.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

The thesis started with four objectives: 1) exploring how the liberal context might prevent stronger forms of recognition from developing; 2) assessing how ideas about social cohesion are intertwined with ideas about identity and recognition; 3) determining the consequences and limits of reformist approaches like the liberal ones on issues of identity and recognition; and 4) developing a notion of ontological identity and investigate its relationship with agency.

To shed light on these topics, I critically reviewed what I believe are the prevailing liberal theories of diversity and plurality of our time: civic nationalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism, and when helpful, I contrasted them with communitarianism and cosmopolitanism. I investigated how these theories deal with identity and recognition and showed some of their limits. Particularly, I focused on the tendency to reduce cultural and other identarian conflicts to the political arena as a limit. Such a tendency prevents deeper forms of recognition from developing. It is clear that political recognition has positive effects in terms of diversity, plurality and equality, besides having shown itself effective in solving issues surrounding integration of minorities and social justice. My research never questioned this utility. Nevertheless, it was necessary to expand the limits of recognition outside the reliable political sphere, otherwise the price we have to pay for this secure but confined way of dealing with plurality are weak forms of recognition.

The main suspicion that motivated this research was that claims for recognition are not always political demands, or not only; they are embedded in more complex existential situations. Therefore, political recognition, as valuable as it is, oftentimes is not the context in which these claims for recognition make sense. For this reason, I proposed a concept of strong identity and recognition as an alternative that is not opposed to political recognition, but is rather a more general

form that contains it. I drew mainly on Charles Taylor's concept of identity and built my own work upon it. I pushed his idea of identity as self-understanding further to include our whole being in order to move further into what I call, following Emmanuel Levinas, a humanism of the other. Contextualising and refining this concept represent my thesis' key contributions. The idea of identity must go beyond our self-understanding and agency, without denying them, to address claims of recognition.

Additionally, I incorporated critical race theory's perspective to show how some of the criticism I developed has been voiced in a particular instance. It allowed me to exemplify how a reformist approach prevents radical changes, which is aligned with my general hypothesis. Finally, I examined some forms of systematic oppression that can be inflicted from liberal institutions, particularly to minorities, which put the spotlight on the limited benefits of political recognition.

Future researchers might find these small contributions useful, especially considering there is a growing tendency to conceptualise diversity and plurality outside the limits of liberalism; still more, we can try to conceptualise them outside the limits of the political realm. As I showed, even multiculturalism can be understood as a project trying to expand the traditional liberal framework without breaking it. In consequence, besides criticising the limits of liberal theories of diversity and plurality, the notions of strong identity and recognition might contribute something to future investigations on plurality and diversity. The existing knowledge of modern diversity and plurality is enhanced by unveiling its ontological foundation, which to my knowledge has not been done since Taylor and Parekh.

Unfortunately, I could not achieve all that I would have liked in this research. The clearest limitation is that my effort was not enough to develop a clear idea of strong recognition. In this text, I could only properly theorise strong identity. Strong recognition appears in the text only as a regulative idea in the Kantian sense. I hope future projects allow me to follow this path. I aspire to keep working in this line of a new *humanism of the other,* but I also hope this work shows to others this project's intellectual worth.

There are other kinds of limitations that must be considered as well. As with many investigations of this kind, mine has been largely critical, focusing on what I consider the problems of liberal pluralism and diversity but not offering much in the way of a positive alternative. The ontological construction of identity and recognition takes the issues of diversity and plurality in a different direction, but it is not clear how it contributes to the political treatment of those issues. For instance, I advocate

the idea of ‘allowing’ some internal conflict and tension as a way of granting sufficient room for identity change. Nevertheless, I am unable to set limits or to know when those tensions might become too much, such that there is identity annihilation instead of identity change. I am convinced that the ontological perspective has much to say on particular issues, but more work has to be done. Finally, I wish I could delve further into the problem of essentialisation of identity and the qualitative difference between essentialising the identity of minorities and of majorities.

As a result of the completion of my critical analysis, along with my proposal of strong forms of identity, I found some important results in relation to my research objectives. Next, I present 4 brief sections related to each objective, assembling what I think are the main results, and one final section suggesting a possible route for further research.

9.1 Identity and Individuality in liberal theories

Throughout the preceding chapters, I mentioned some assumptions and consequences of various forms of cosmopolitanism. Particularly in the chapters on critical race theory and interculturalism, I described a cosmopolitan assumption which affirms that any sort of ethnic, racial, religious or national consciousness should be avoided because it contradicts the liberal principles of equality and neutrality. Additionally, cosmopolitanism claims that there is a considerable risk in attachments to collective identity, namely that tying individuals to fixed structures restricts individual freedom. These conditions were enough for Chapter 7 to suggest that interculturalism in particular, and cosmopolitanism in general, do not suit our effort of pushing notions of strong identity and recognition. Overall, *most cosmopolitan perspectives cannot perceive that we can secure individual agency at the same time as we recognise the ontological weight of cultural attachments.*

The idea of a universal cosmopolitan community draws on the assumption of the inwardly individualised modern identity. Chapter 4 presented the ways in which multicultural attempts at expanding the liberal framework work to disprove this assumption. Taylor in particular shows there are always specific moral frameworks which provide individuals with meaning and orientation. There is no such thing as a universal framework devoid of particular purposes and, at the same time, able to provide meaning to individuals. In other words, *the cosmopolitan perspective is not free from attachments, but the one in which the particular horizon of an over-*

individualised self allows us to make sense of that belief, that is, the feeling we can function perfectly without attachments.

In Chapter 8 I showed that features shared by every individual, particularly reason and agency reside within the self, but at the same time are shaped by something external: the historical context and cultural horizon. *Even if the cultural context and other collective attachments are historically constructed, this fact does not mean they are not crucial for the individuals within the time in which they take place.* Completely the opposite, collective 'determinations' are truly necessary because, like any other genuine historical determination, they shape the horizon from which we -in every particular place and time- understand the world in the way we do. The historicity of our self has important consequences for our human being.

In consequence*,* I argued that *individuals are sufficient to carry their own life in pragmatic terms, but not necessarily in ontological ones; we are self-sufficient but not complete.* In relation to this aspect, I am referring to the impossibility of finding or constructing the meaning of what is human or her personal identity just by herself.[124]

When it comes to liberal theories of plurality, such as multiculturalism, they understand the complexity of individuality and attachments to collective values. However, the basic tension between individuality and the bonds to culture, religion or ethnicity is not considered in its full philosophical dimension. The relation between individuality, identity and agency are analysed on a different level, mostly political. Multiculturalists know people's attachments to their culture are something that comes from the core of the human condition (Kymlicka, 1995:90), and they represent the main mechanism for making sense of the world. Culture is more than just a skin-deep attachment coming from practical judgement. However, I argued that *multiculturalists miss the existential implications of our agency, treating agency as if it is independent of identity and can fully reshape it.* In other words, it overemphasises agency in a way that makes us believe that questioning and choosing values, practices and behaviours lead us to a direct construction of our identity. By contrast, I argued in Chapter 8 that our freedom is attached to the context in which we exercise it. Our agency is embedded in a more complex existential device than the direct expression of will and reason. Every time we engage in real critical thought about cultural goods, we engage in something deeper than just a choice, we risk our being.

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[124] This is a more general and positive way of framing Pirandello's story about finding identity in others; it is also a more general claim than Taylor's dialogical construction of

Allow me a thought experiment just to exemplify multiculturalism's position halfway between liberalism and a strong idea of identity, as it is very important to me that the reader has a concrete image of what I have argued. At some point in our lives, we can deny the religion in which we were brought up, and nonetheless catch ourselves judging different events from that religious mindset; we can consciously advocate liberal principles, only to later find ourselves adopting conservative attitudes; we can support feminist demands and, at the same time, surreptitiously engage in patriarchal practices. Then we can question: Are we the secular, liberal, feminist individuals that we chose to be or the religious, conservative, patriarchal individuals represented by our actions? The answer is both; *we are what we construct of ourselves but also what is beyond our agency.*

Multiculturalists and other liberal thinkers would accept the above without reservation. They know very well that we cannot, for instance, go beyond our history and language, and in that sense, we cannot go beyond our culture. However, and this is the main problem, I emphasised in Chapters 4 and 5 they insist that *the civic national culture is a sort of exception in which detached criticism is not only possible but easier.* Kymlicka says:

> …at the national level, the very fact which makes national identity so inappropriate for communitarian politics -namely, that it does not rest on shared values- is precisely what makes it an appropriate basis for liberal politics. The national culture provides a meaningful context of choice for people, without limiting their ability to question and revise particular values or beliefs. (Kymlicka, 1995:92-93)

However, I described that *civic nations are not just political but also ethical communities*. Even more, national culture, even if it tries not to foster a particular idea of the good, shapes the members' understandings, their identities, in the same *ontological* way the goods do in subnational communities. Therefore, there is no *qualitative* difference in the way individuality and identity function in liberal states and in other contexts, at least not on a fundamental level.

We can conclude that multiculturalists are right: liberal societies provide a space to *politically* assist individuals to assess their moral values and traditional ways of life. They are also right that within non-liberal contexts individuals might struggle more to express their doubts about the dominant values of the community (Kymlicka, 2001a:53). Nonetheless, even if it is more difficult, members of non-liberal communities are able to remain strongly attached to collective values and maintain their agency. Groups outside the liberal perspective are usually

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identity.

conceptualised in a way that overemphasises shared 'features', including a common understanding of the good and other values. Notwithstanding, there is diversity, internal movement and struggles within the communities, which denote that in non-liberal societies, members can push, despite several limitations, alternative understandings of values and themselves. *In the last instance this internal conflict is something we should acknowledge as a legitimate source of diversity, not only the direct choice of one good over others but the different interpretations of the same good.* This complexity also provides richness to our life; it makes it diverse.

9.2 Social cohesion and ontological community

In the text, I explored how liberal theories of diversity conceive of social cohesion and related issues such as solidarity. I described that social cohesion entails knowing how and why individuals are held together within a community, but also finding who the people are in each case and accordingly who can or cannot be a member of the group. I argued that both ideas of social cohesion are condensed in the notion of shared identity. *In liberal theories of plurality and diversity, a shared identity is what simultaneously keeps the members of a community together, defines their membership and fosters solidarity.* In the text, I called this the recognition-allegiance dialectic.

I dealt with the problem of social cohesion in several chapters. Now I can affirm that in liberal societies, we can pinpoint two forms of social cohesion and membership, that is, two forms of identity: cultural -what might hold together members of minorities- and civic -what might hold together members of the larger community-. The allegiances we can develop to the community and fellow members are separately or simultaneously built on the basis of these attitudes. I showed that *from the ontological perspective, what holds people together in the same community is the fact they share the same horizon, the same context, without necessarily implying they share the same Weltanschauung.* This means they do not necessarily need to endorse the same values -cultural or civic-, but to participate in the complex articulation in which those values make sense, either to endorse, adjust or deny them. In this respect, those individuals sharing the same world share a collective identity. From this perspective, the community is a fact; it is the particular sociocultural context through which every single individual comes to the world and in which some forms of membership are already guaranteed, some are disputed and

some others are fragile. Positive social cohesion and loyalty are always fragile and perhaps it should be this way, otherwise there would not be enough room for change and criticism.

In Chapter 8 I argued that, *sharing the same identity is the source of social cohesion but also of social dispute.* The articulation of identity as a whole is what provides unity and cohesion in an ontological sense. I also emphasised that this cohesion does not erase internal tensions and disputes. A person can legitimately be member of a community and alternatively endorse its values, try to change them or openly deny them, that is, foster the particular content of social cohesion in the liberal sense, try to change that content or simply challenge it; she can feel constrained, represented or misrepresented by the values, practices, behaviours and beliefs without losing her place in the community. In consequence, we were able to say that issues of positive social cohesion and solidarity are valuable and worthy of pursuit, but they are also part of a more complex structure including the internal tension of the communities. Let me say it in a different way, there is collective cohesion, ontological cohesion, even in the middle of disputes.

In Chapter 7 I proposed a distinction between community as togetherness and community as likeness. As I argued, *living together* means building, making sense of, and sometimes rejecting the beliefs and values shaping our being. These two ideas might help to show that *the social cohesion of a community can be sustained or changed because its members truly live together, and because they share experiences in a meaningful way*. Alternatively stated, social cohesion is a result of people dialectically constructing their beings in a shared meaningful way, that is, making sense of -endorsing or rejecting- beliefs and values in the same world. However, in another sense it is already there when people engage in meaningful interactions because it is exactly part of what provides them with meaning. Social cohesion can change its content but, in a way, it is always ontologically secured.

In Chapter 5 I described how liberal theories supporting notions of collective identity are often accused of essentialising their members in their search for securing social cohesion and solidarity. I argued that some sort of formal essentialisation is unavoidable when referring to a collectivity. However, the claim of essentialism does not occur in the ontological dimension. On this level, what provides solidarity amongst members of a community is that they have similar experiences in the phenomenological sense, that is, similar articulations of the

world. *There is not a proper essence of the group, only a shared horizon that by definition has not limits.*

If articulations are more similar amongst like-minded individuals or cohabitating individuals is something I cannot answer. I do not have evidence to demonstrate that if we live under the same determinants we are predisposed to develop stronger ties, or if we are like-minded, even if it seems plausible. Consequently, *members of a group are part of the same community, not exactly because they are like-minded, nor because they plainly share material and historical conditions, but because they deal with the same articulation of issues and events.* Perhaps if they make sense of this articulation in a similar way they are more likely to secure solidarity, but this possibility does not condition the existence of the community. A thought experiment might illustrate this.

Let us consider two members of the same family who share 'the same' horizon, two siblings that grew up together in 'the same world'. No matter how different their personalities might be, and how differently they construct their sense of self, it would be very difficult to argue that they do not belong to the same communities. From their nuclear family to the extended family, their neighbourhood, the nation. The same narratives of historical and cultural heritage, the same language, religious education -or lack thereof-, values, class, ethnicity, etc shaped them. Notwithstanding, as usually happens, they might be significantly different. They might have constructed their selves, their identity, in very different ways; they can disagree on fundamental issues and, nevertheless, be members of the same communities.

What my argument suggests is that communities do not appear only when positive social cohesion has been secured, but there is always an ontological community to which we belong. We are always part of processes of belonging, endorsing and rejecting parts of a complex articulation of issues.

9.3 Liberal reformism

It is useful to bring back an idea behind the notion of political recognition's limits: reformist vs. radicalism. I mainly developed this idea in Chapter 2, although I did so in the very particular terms of the African-American situation and American institutions. The notion of 'radical' or in our case 'strong' is always a relative matter. A standard liberal take is that the institutional and gradual implementation of

changes allows the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups. The liberal opinion is that radical change, one that brings great changes, is the one pushed through the structures and institutions. What could be more radical than a structural change? Therefore, fundamental change is one that finds final expression in laws and policies such as group-differentiated rights, citizenship or anti-discrimination laws. This is what I considered the reformist path. Liberalism might push an idea to its last consequences and, in that sense, be radical, but it does so within the same paradigm.[125] Other ideas of radical change would affirm exactly the opposite: it is a change of paradigm that would bring radical change. *The benefit of the liberal reformist approach is that it is more likely to keep peace and reduce conflict. The downside of the reformist perspective is that it prevents some important changes from happening.*

This distinction between reform and radical change allowed me to argue that stronger -more radical- forms of recognition can only be found outside the liberal, reformist framework. However, there are problems that remain open for further debate: following CRT, I wondered whether liberal institutions can serve the purposes of minorities, as liberals say, or if institutions will, as before, keep supporting the interests of specific groups. Although the second viewpoint appeals to me, I did not find a good answer, which is a task for political philosophers. What I could conclude is that a strong form of recognition need not be institutional. In fact, I argued that we need deeper forms of recognition exactly because the institutional ones are incapable of addressing what is behind some claims. *At least on an ontological level, identity's recognition does not come from institutions nor does it need to be mediated by them.*

Another consequence I found derived from the reformist approach, if we agree on its limits, is that deep issues of diversity and plurality are not resolved assuming a particular methodological approach. The root of the problems does not disappear by using a bottom-up perspective, like that proposed by interculturalism, instead of a top-down approach, like that of liberal multiculturalism. In none of these cases is the root of the problem touched: CRT would say that root is white, male,

[125] A particularly interesting example is the one provided by Charles Mills in his idea of *black radical liberalism,* which *'…*fully adheres to the standard liberal ideals—if more often betrayed than realized—of universalism and egalitarianism. It seeks to correct the (anti-universalist, anti-egalitarian) distortions in mainstream white liberalism, whether de jure or de facto, introduced by the complicity of that iteration of liberalism with white supremacy, both nationally and globally.' (Mills, 2017:201) For most of us, including the black radical traditions we analysed, radicalism would require moving away from liberalism.

bourgeois privilege, and I argued that on a fundamental level the problem is modern identity. *Liberal recognition is a form of recognition without the other, ontologically and politically.*

9.4 Strong identity

First and foremost, strong identity refers to our being, as a whole, as the unity that allows us to say we are identical to ourselves and as the continuity that explains what we are in each moment is connected with what we have been before. After saying that our agency is always secured at the ontological level, I argued that our identity goes beyond our agency. This means that our identity is more than the sum of attachments, decisions, feelings, projects, etcetera. It is the articulation of all these in an organic unit. Even when our identity is clearly constructed -because agency is secured- there are 'parts' of the construction that remain untouched while others change. *Our identity is given and constructed at the same time.* We construct ourselves from what we have been given.

In contrast to other concepts of identity, which I do not reject, strong identity is not a matter of affinity or preference, nor of emotional attachment. It is more than a feeling of belonging. *In the strict sense of the term, strong identity is not something open to negotiation or adjustment in a pragmatic way*; to affirm that would be the same that saying we can manipulate our whole being at once. On the other hand, I argued that to deny negotiations and pragmatic adjustments is not equivalent to denying that our identity can change, is socially constructed, or dialogically shaped. In more technical terms, strong identity is not a resource, property or relation. Following Merleau-Ponty, I expressed that at this fundamental level: it is misleading to say we *have* an identity, even worse to say we *have* multiple identities. It is better to say that our identity is our complex but unitary being.

I showed that *if our identity is our whole being there is no contradiction in saying that it is at the same time individual and collective.* In contrast to what some liberal thinkers believe, the dialectical nature of identity does not prevent the exercise of our agency. We develop strong attachments to collective values, practices and behaviours because they shape us. It is impossible to exist without a context that shapes us. I demonstrated, following philosophers as Heidegger, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty that the horizon is more than just a scenography that works as decoration for our decisions. It shapes us and determines the limits of our

agency. Therefore, our being is embedded in more complex existential circumstances than the simple exercise of our agency; likewise, some of our claims of identity recognition have an existential context that is not considered by political recognition, leading me to the last conclusion.

In the process of constructing identity, we can be sure that a significant other is always there. Our 'dependence' on others, on the external in general, reaches our individual self without nullifying it. Then, taking into account the external, the complex articulations of the world and ourselves imply that the construction of our identity become an endless process, a process in which we continuously change 'parts' and leave others, but always remaining as a meaningful articulation. *Our experience, our life, is nothing but a particular way of articulating the world. Our identity includes what we have managed to change, what we are in the process of changing, what we could not change and what we have not yet tried to change.*

Ultimately, what I tried to do in this research was to follow an intuition that has been around for a long time, which is expressed in the following way: referring to our identity is referring to who and what we are, no more, but no less.

> And if we ask about a person's identity we are seldom today asking about their 'soul or their 'hidden self'. Instead, we are usually asking one of two things about a person. First, we might be asking about a person's 'overall identity' and what this person is as a whole (Parekh, 2008, p. 9). This is difficult to know, as self-reflection can entail questions that may be too painful, time consuming or complex to answer and it seldom prevents us surprising ourselves and others. Likewise, what a person is changes over time – hence old philosophical debates about whether a person's identity remains the same over their life despite the ways in which they change during it (Parfit, 1987; Sorabji, 2006). Of course we know parts of what we are, and thus a person might say that being a Muslim, a man or an artist are all part of his identity. But it still remains unclear how to interpret and relate these parts of what we are so as to discern what we are as a whole. Thus, what we are as a whole usually remains unclear to us. (Uberoi, 2018:49)[126]

What I tried to do was to shed light on our overall identity, which usually remains unclear to us and escapes from our hands, changing the very moment we thought we had it, because is still one of the most fundamental questions we have to face as human beings.

[126] The references in the quotation correspond to *A New Politics of Identity* (Parekh, 2008), *Reasons and Persons* (Parfit, 1984) and *Self-Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death* (Sorabji, 2006)

9.5 What is coming next: strong recognition and history

I will conclude by briefly indicating future lines of research. These begin from one of my conclusions: that in modern states political identity is not enough to provide a strong form of recognition. It helps the practical integration of minority groups into the mainstream society but it does not necessarily lead to a deep and genuine recognition of the value of minorities. In other words, the form of recognition that we need has to go beyond plurality within a unique liberal framework, it has to allow a diversity of frameworks. From here we can delineate what we should look for in a notion of strong recognition. Strong recognition is not institutional, although not necessarily opposed to it. It has to address collectivities and individuals equally, that is, not be restricted to only one. It also should go beyond everyday interactions. But mainly, *strong recognition should imply a direct recognition of the value of diverse minorities and their difference.*

In the text, I assessed the idea of dialogue and argued that we should seriously consider a pre-dialogic form of recognition. At least in the way we understand dialogue in the liberal context, there is a gap between the real and formal conditions of dialogue. Moreover, this pre-dialogical engagement should not be conditioned to a previous adaptation of behaviours or practices; it should not imply any kind of pragmatic negotiation of identities. *Strong recognition is an unconditional recognition of the other as different.* It should foster the aim of recognising the value of specific forms of diversity, despite the fact that the value only makes sense in the context in which appears. I want to further explore a set of questions including: Does relativism really have no upside? Does relativism always lead to incommensurability and miscommunication? And then again, is sharing a unique core of values the only way to secure social cohesion? I think that despite these unanswered questions there is one conviction: we should recognise people as different without devaluing them.

As is well established, by Taylor for instance, part of our identity is shaped by the recognition or misrecognition of others. If our identity is what allows us to understand who we are, how we are and where we stand, then it is completely plausible that recognition, or the lack of it, plays an important part in the way we understand ourselves. However, *it seems equally important that the other recognise in us an equal value, but recognise us directly as different.*

I want to develop the argument that the directionality of the recognition

process goes the other way round than we usually believe: understanding the other is more likely to happen when we already have a strong form of recognition. *It is not true that to recognise the other we have to understand them first.* Strong recognition would allow the suspension of judgement on something that is outside our existential framework. As Levinas' concept of vulnerability (1972), strong recognition is a notion that starts from realising that getting closer to the other is not representing her, nor even the consciousness of the proximity to it, but something deeper.

Along with recognition, we also could develop a notion of history that can clearly explain changes in individual and collective identity. In other words, we cannot forget the other main problem of identity: explaining how what changes also remains. It is clear that every individual and culture change over time, that is, they are historical. *The dialectical structure that allows us to explain how in the case of our identity there is no priority between context and agency should be expanded to come with an idea of history.* We have done part of the work. We know that we exercise our agency from a determined context, and at the same time we historically shape that context by exercising our agency. I believe that these reveal something about the movement of history. Conflict and internal disagreement are a matter of fact and it becomes a source of political diversity and the motor of history.

Parallel to Rimbaud's formula *Je est un autre* –I is another- in which my identity is the reflection of others, in which the individual is at risk of being defined by the others; there is also the chance to approach the other, to put ourselves in another's place. My efforts have been directed to push this notion further, to emphasise that we have a relationship with the other in which, as Levinas would say, we are responsible for the other, to support her, to be in her place, and in last instance, to suffer from her.

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